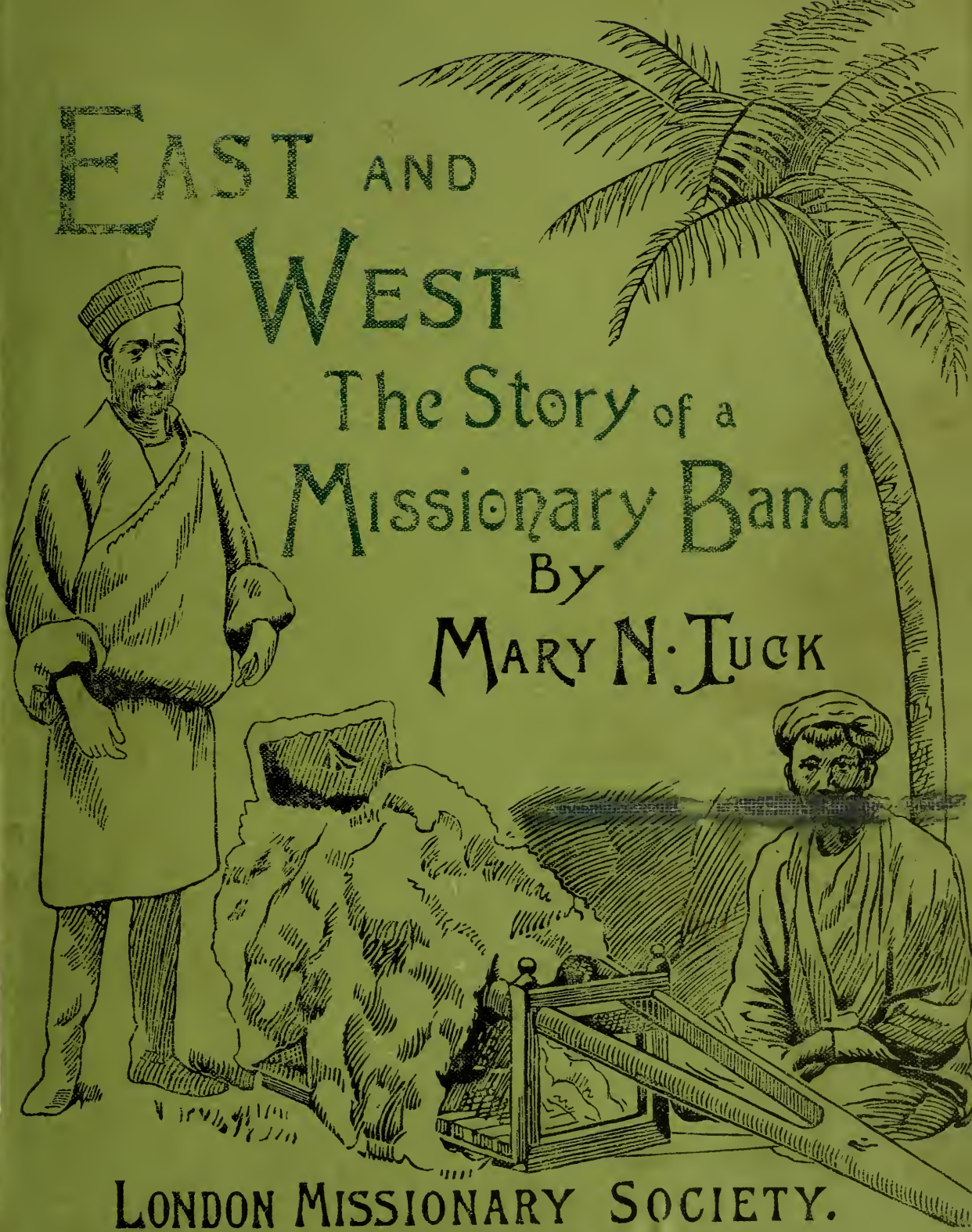
EAST AND WEST

The Story of a Missionary Band

By

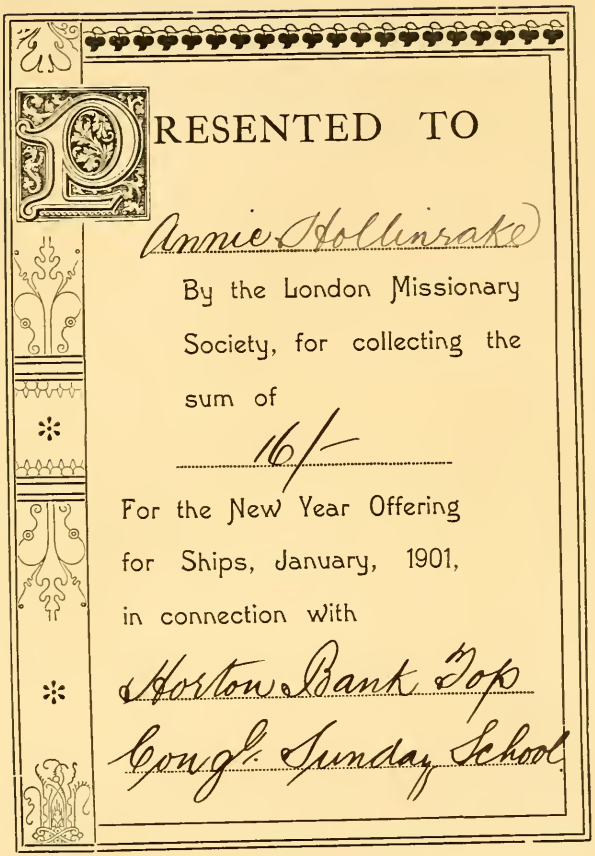
MARY N. TUCK



LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

M

The Rev. Robert Howard



LIST OF VESSELS.

JOHN WILLIAMS (steamship)	In the South Seas and New Guinea.
NIUÉ (lugger)	
OLIVE BRANCH (schooner)	
HANAMOA (cutter)	
And many Whale Boats used by Missionaries and Native Teachers.	
MORNING STAR (steel lifeboat)	On Lake Tanganyika.
MARDIE (Berhampur) and *TARA* (Calcutta) ..	In India.
GOSPEL BOAT (Amoy)	In China.

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BY

MARY N. TUCK

(LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY, BERHAMPUR, NORTH INDIA)

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE WHEEL," ETC

WITH SEVENTY ILLUSTRATIONS

London

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MESSRS. SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & CO

Dedicated

To my Father

Who in this and in all my Life Work

has helped Me

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

EAST AND WEST:

THE STORY OF A MISSIONARY BAND

CHAPTER I

MARJORIE

ON a sofa, in a large and comfortably-furnished room, a little girl was lying. Her name was Marjorie Merton, and in consequence of a serious fall, which had injured the spine, the doctor had decided that she must lie flat on her back for a good many months. Before that accident Marjorie had been full of life and spirits; she was the leader in all the games; and now, one look at her face as she lay on that sofa showed plainly enough that she was finding it very weary work thus to lie still hour after hour and day after day.

Marjorie was ten years old. She had no sisters, and only one brother, Rex; but he was away from home at a boarding school. Though Rex was full of fun and mischief, he was very fond of his little sister, and tried to be good and kind to her when he was at home.

She was thinking of him as she lay on the couch all alone,—for he had only the day before gone back to school, and she was missing him very much,—when the door opened, and a sweet-faced lady came in. She was greeted with, "Oh, mother, I am so tired of lying here;

it is so lonely now Rex has gone back to school. When shall I be able to get up and walk about?"

Mrs. Merton had a letter in her hand, and going up to the sofa she sat down and said, "Poor little girl, we all miss Rex, and I know you do even more than the rest of us; but I have some good news for you, Marjorie—Auntie Ruth is coming home! She writes that she expects to be here next week, and she is coming to stay with us for a time. She has been very ill, and, though much better now, she will have to be very careful all through the winter time; so you and auntie will be quite company for each other."

On hearing this, Marjorie's face lighted up. She could hardly remember this auntie, who had gone away to be a missionary in India some five years before; but her mother had often talked about her, and two or three times in each year a letter had come to Marjorie herself from her auntie, telling the little girl about the strange land, and the little brown boys and girls whom she loved and taught and helped out there.

Now there was indeed something pleasant to look forward to, and Marjorie counted the hours that must pass before the next Wednesday would come, the day on which the Indian steamer was expected to reach London. The steamer was keeping its time, so her father was able to go down to the docks to meet it, and, while he was away, her mother sat on the couch beside Marjorie, who, in honour of the occasion, was dressed in a new red dressing-gown. Her mother kept her quiet by telling her over again stories about this Auntie Ruth when she was a little girl.

It was nearly dark when they heard the bell ring, announcing the arrival of the traveller. Knowing how impatient Marjorie would be, her father brought auntie at once in to see her. For a few minutes

no one could speak; mother was so glad to have her sister back again, and Marjorie, on looking at her, felt quite sure that she should soon get to love this auntie very much.

What was she like, do you ask? I hardly know how to describe her; but as I want you to get to love her as Marjorie did, I must try and do my best.

MARJORIE.

She was thin, and not very tall; her hair was fair and curly, and her eyes were grey. She wore a grey dress, simply made, and fitting well; but it was the expression on her face that attracted you. Her face was thin, and it was very pale, and there was a look upon it that seemed to say she had suffered very much; but self-denying love shone out from it, and, as you looked at her, you felt quite sure that

she had always been, and would always be, ready to help anybody who might get into any kind of trouble. All that auntie *was*, in loving service to others, Marjorie did not find out until long afterwards;, but that first night she went to bed happier than she had been for weeks.

Next morning, when Marjorie had been carried in and safely arranged on her couch, and auntie had been settled comfortably in the big armchair, her mother went out to her morning duties, and left Marjorie and her auntie to talk together, and to get to know each other.

Auntie had noticed the fretful expression that had come into Marjorie's face, and that morning she had made a special prayer to our Heavenly Father, that while she was at home she might be able to help her little niece to bear bravely and well the weary waiting time that was appointed her.

Very soon the two were chatting together like old friends. Auntie had all sorts of stories to tell about her voyage home, and about the strange sights she had seen; and Marjorie in her turn talked to auntie about her school and her friends, and all the fun they used to have. But then, suddenly remembering how different it all was now, she hid her face in her pillow and sobbed bitterly, saying, "Now they are all so busy at school, and have good times on holidays. But I couldn't play with them if they came here to see me; so it is no good inviting them, and I never see them now."

It took a long time to comfort her, but that morning's chat made auntie think a good deal, and after having a long talk with her sister, auntie said, a few days later, "Marjorie, how many school friends have you got living near here?"

"Let me see, auntie," Marjorie answered; "there are Muriel and

MURIEL AND DORIS.

Doris Hill, and their brother Lewis, and Phyllis Jackson, and Nora and Bernard Price. Muriel and Doris are twins, and they are just as old as I am. Lewis is nine, Phyllis is eleven, Nora is twelve, and Bernard is ten. They all live quite near, but I don't see much of them now."

"Do they go to school on Saturdays?" was auntie's next question; and when Marjorie told her *that* was a whole holiday, she said, —

"How would you like to start a 'Missionary Band,' Marjorie, and invite your friends to come here from four o'clock to half-past six every Saturday? Mother says she will give them tea, and we will all work for the little brown boys and girls away in India, and while we work for them I will tell you stories about them."

Marjorie's eyes sparkled as she said, "How did you know, auntie, that I wanted to see them? It was because I could not give them a good time, and play with them at all sorts of games, that I did not have them here to tea. But this will be splendid; they all like stories, and I know they will come. What work shall we do? Tell me all about it, auntie."

Auntie replied, "First, Marjorie, we must invite your friends, and as you must not write, I will be your secretary. There are six of them, and each one shall have a little note. Here are six plain cards, and I think they would be more interested if we drew a little Indian picture in the corner of each."

While she talked, auntie was sketching, and soon on the cards were to be seen palm trees, funny mud houses, brown babies, and boats on a river; and then the invitations were written and sent out, inviting the six little people for the next Saturday.

That being done, auntie began to get the work ready. Four dark-haired dolls were bought, and two scrap-books, and mother turned

out of her piece-bag some bright bits of woollen, silk, and cotton stuffs; and then she found a pile of old Christmas cards and scraps. It was decided that the girls should begin by dressing the dolls, and the boys by filling the scrap-books, and as Marjorie was not permitted to do either of these things, but wanted to have her share, she was allowed to give the money to buy two dolls.

Saturday came, and punctually at four o'clock all the six boys and girls arrived, all of them a little bit curious as to what a "Missionary Band" could be like. Paste was ready for the boys, and they began at once to cut their pictures, arrange, and fill their scrap-books. The girls grouped themselves round Marjorie's sofa, and each was supplied with a needle and cotton, some material, and a doll, for which they began to make a little garment.

Marjorie had to lie still, but she was very glad to see her friends again, and much merry chatter went on, till, at five o'clock, the tea was brought in. The table was drawn near to Marjorie's sofa, and they all had a rest from work, and much enjoyed the good things which Mrs. Merton had provided.

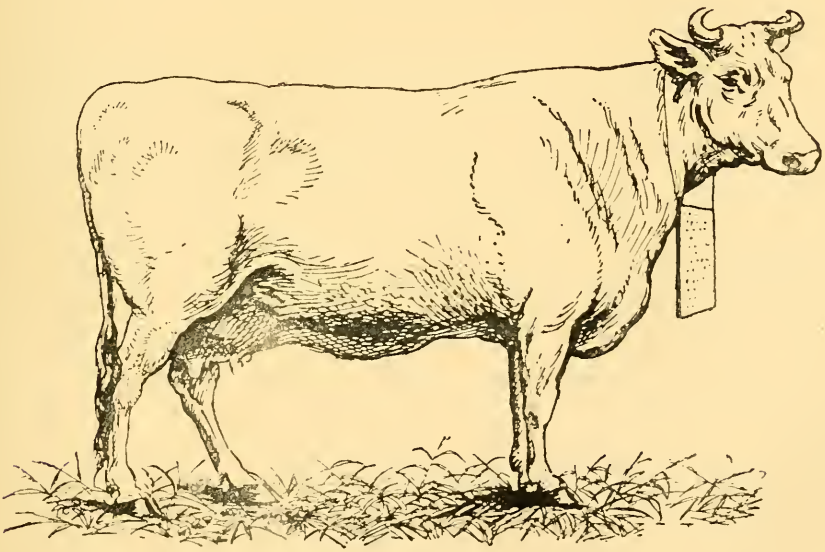
The tea well over, they set to work again; and then auntie explained to them what a "Missionary Band" is, and asked them if they would like to come every week, and work for the little brown boys and girls, promising that she would tell them a fresh story every time. Then she suggested they should try to save at least a halfpenny every week, and put it in the missionary box. And turning to Marjorie, she handed her a parcel, saying: "Your father has bought you a new missionary box, and it is always to stand on the table at our meetings."

Many hands were ready to help Marjorie undo the brown paper and string, and inside they found the funniest missionary box any

of them had ever seen. It was a *cow*, covered with a light brown skin, and having a hole in its back to receive the pennies. Round its neck there was hung a card, on which was written:—

"I am a missionary cow:
No heathen knee to me shall bow:
Instead I hope some pence to gain
To send the Bible o'er the main;
So, when you hear my gentle 'moo,'
Kind friend, at least put in a sou."

Its head moved from side to side, and as it moved it made a noise something like that which a real live cow makes.



"CRUMMIE," THE MISSIONARY COW.

CHAPTER II

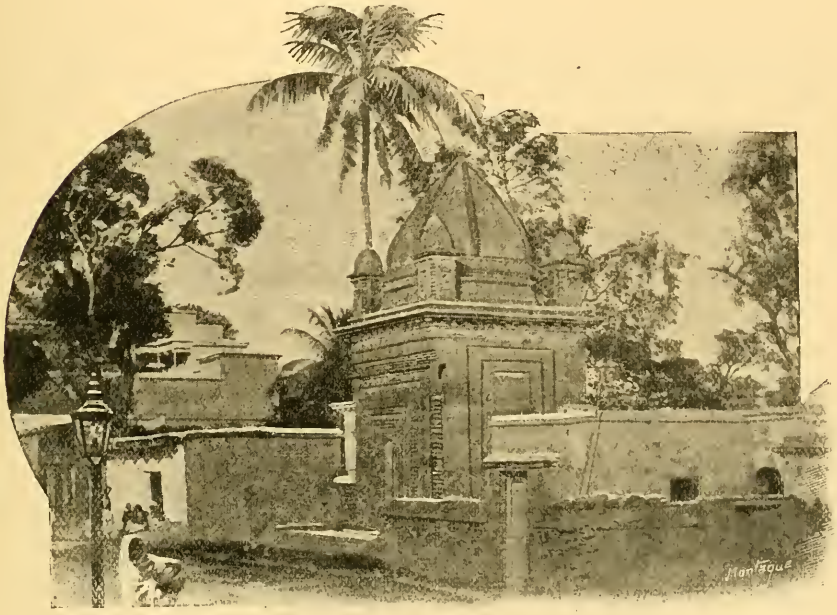
PODO—A LITTLE HINDOO GIRL

ALL the children were delighted with "Crummie," and all of them determined to save ever so many pennies to put inside her. When she had been thoroughly examined, Marjorie said, "Now for our first story, auntie, dear." After seeing that every one could get on for a while with their work without needing any help, auntie began :—

"Little Hindoo boys and girls have a very different kind of life from yours in England. Their homes, their clothes, their food, their language, and their school life all are different, and so is their country. India is very hot, almost all the year through, so the people do not need to wear many or warm clothes. For nine months in the year there is seldom, if ever, any rain ; and then the rain comes all at once, and continues some three months. During that time everything is very damp and everybody is very miserable.

"Podo, the little girl about whom I am going to tell you, lived at Berhampur, a country town in Bengal, North India. She was the youngest child of a large family, and her father's house was situated in the town. He was a high caste and wealthy man ; but if you had gone to visit his house, I am sure that you would have thought it was very bare and comfortless. It was built of bricks, but they were very roughly put together, and outside it looked rather dilapidated.

There was a little verandah in the front of it, which opened into a room in which there was a large wooden table, having very short legs, and this was covered with a white sheet, on which were several large fat bolsters. This strange table was used either as a bed or



HINDOO TEMPLE: PODO'S HOUSE ON THE LEFT.

as a sofa. There were also a few chairs, a real table, and a bookcase containing a few books.

"In this room the father was accustomed to receive his friends, and here he talked and smoked with them; but none of the ladies of the house ever came to this 'gentleman's room.'

"If you wanted to go and see the ladies, you would have to pass through a dark passage, in which the firewood was stored, then through a dark back room in which a calf was kept tied up, and then up some dark and very uneven brick stairs, and then at last you would come to the part of the house in which the women of the family lived.

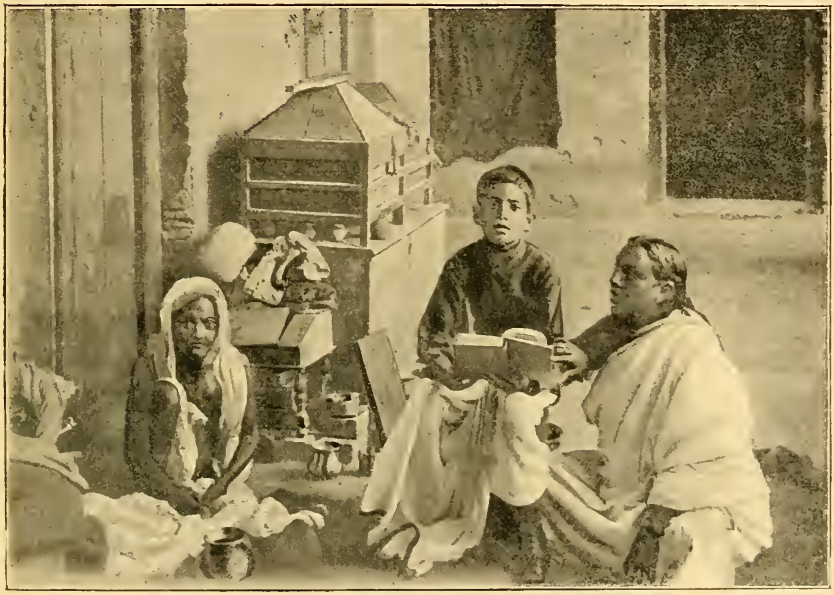
"The room at the top of the stairs was a kind of general room, and in it were kept a good many of the family stores. All round the walls there were earthenware pots and jars, some of them hanging from the ceiling, and some of them standing on the ground. These jars contained rice, lentils, spices, sugar, and perhaps honey or '*gur*,' which is a kind of treacle.

"Leading out of this room there was the kitchen, or cookroom on the one side, and some bedrooms on the other. The cookroom looked rather dirty, for, though there was a hole in one part of the roof by which the smoke might escape, a good deal of it never seemed able to find its way through, and so it remained to blacken the walls. The fireplace was very near the ground, and the cook sat on the floor as she stirred the rice and vegetables that were boiling in the pots, and fried the fish.

"When the food was cooked a number of brass plates were brought in, and on each was put a 'white mountain' of rice, and a little fish, and some vegetables; and then these were taken into the next room.

"Podo's father and brothers always had their breakfast or dinner first; and then her mother and sisters and herself shared what was left after the men had finished and gone away. When Podo was a little girl, as she often got very hungry, she was sometimes allowed to have her meal first, or with her father; but when she got older she

had to wait with the others. There were no chairs, no knives, no forks, no spoons in the house, and yet nobody seemed to miss them, for they had been accustomed all their lives to sitting cross-legged on a mat, and to eating their food with their fingers. They managed it so cleverly that they very rarely spilled any of the rice.



INTERIOR OF A ZENANA.

"Podo was a pretty little girl, with a light brown skin, long black hair, and brown eyes; and after her bath—which she had every morning, either in the river Ganges, or in a room at home, where the Ganges water was poured over her from earthen pots—she looked very bright and bonny, especially when she had on a clean *sari*, as

the white strip of muslin, with a coloured border, which is worn by the girls, is called. As her father was rich, she wore gold bracelets on her arms, and a gold chain round her neck, and a little gold ring, with a pearl drop, in her nose.

THE GODDESS KALI.

"The only pictures on the walls in her home were very badly drawn, and very ugly ones, representing the gods that she was taught to worship. One was the picture of a frightful-looking

woman with four hands, who wore a necklace of skulls, and held in one hand the head of a man. She had her tongue out, and was dancing on the body of a man. It was a frightful picture to look at, but Podo was told that it represented a goddess whom she would have to worship.

"Another represented a man and woman under a tree; the man was painted blue, and Podo was told that he was Krishna, who is thought to be a great god, and is very much worshipped. She often had to listen to stories of the doings of this Krishna, for he is supposed at one time to have lived on the earth, and done some good, and some very foolish, and some very wicked, things. But these stories did not do her any good, because they so often told of wrong and shameful deeds, and the story-tellers praised in a *god* what they would have very loudly condemned if it had been done by a *man*.

"Another picture was of a god with an elephant's head, and he was worshipped more than any of the others in this home. When Podo was five years old, she had been taken before him by her mother, and taught how to worship him. Then she had been taught to make the image of another god out of some mud, and actually to pray to this mud god to send her a good husband.

"Podo's father was a strict Hindoo, and he went through the required religious ceremonies regularly every day. He was very particular about bathing in the Ganges before he had his morning meal. After that meal he went away to his office, and did not return home until five o'clock.

"When her father had gone to his daily work, Podo's mother and her sisters and sisters-in-law had their baths and ate their rice; and after that they usually had a rest and went to sleep. They often spent quite a long time in doing their long black hair, in gossiping,

and sometimes in quarrelling, or in looking at their jewellery, of which they had a great deal, and of which they were very proud.

GANESHA, THE GOD OF WISDOM.

"None of these women could read, and they were none of them allowed to go out into the street or town; servant women who came

in brought all the news from without. Through a curtain which was hung in front of the verandah outside their bedroom they would sometimes peep into the road below, and there they could see a little of what was going on without being seen; but that was all these poor women were allowed to see of the outside world.

CHRISTIAN TEACHER (IN MIDDLE) WITH HINDOO PUPILS.

"Podo had been to school,—to our Mission School,—and there, besides learning to read and write, she had heard every day something about Jesus and His love, and she had learned to sing some Christian hymns. She attended school very regularly, and was

getting on very nicely; but when she was ten years old her father said, 'Now, Podo, I must arrange for you to be married, and I cannot have you going any longer to the school, or going out into the streets; you must stay at home with your mother.'

"The teacher was very sorry to lose her little pupil, and so she went to see her, and found Podo was very anxious to learn more, especially more needlework. Indeed, she was so anxious that she said, if the zenana teacher would come to her home, and teach her twice a week, she would pay for the teaching with the money her father gave her for lunch. This was about tenpence a month, and she preferred to go without her lunch, if only she could continue her lessons.

"Her father and mother were quite willing that this should be arranged; and every time the teacher came, after she had given Podo her lesson, the mother and the sisters came round her, and were evidently wanting to have a chat; so the teacher stayed on, and told them of the Saviour who loves them, and who wants their love and service. Sometimes she sang a Christian hymn to them, not, however, to an English tune that you would know, but to a queer Bengali air, and to this the women listened most attentively, and often asked her what it all meant.

"Do you want to know what the teacher was like? She was a Bengali woman, well educated and intelligent; for not only could she speak her own language well, but she could read and speak English thoroughly well too. Her father had been a Hindoo once, but had heard of Christ, and felt compelled to give up everything and follow Him. It had meant a great deal to him, for he had been obliged to leave his home and his friends and all those whom he loved, and many of them he had never seen again. As a Christian

he had done much good work among his fellow-countrymen, trying to teach them what he had learned himself. This zenana teacher, when she was a little girl, had often gone with her father on his missionary journeys, and had lived with him for weeks in a boat;

PODO'S TEACHER.

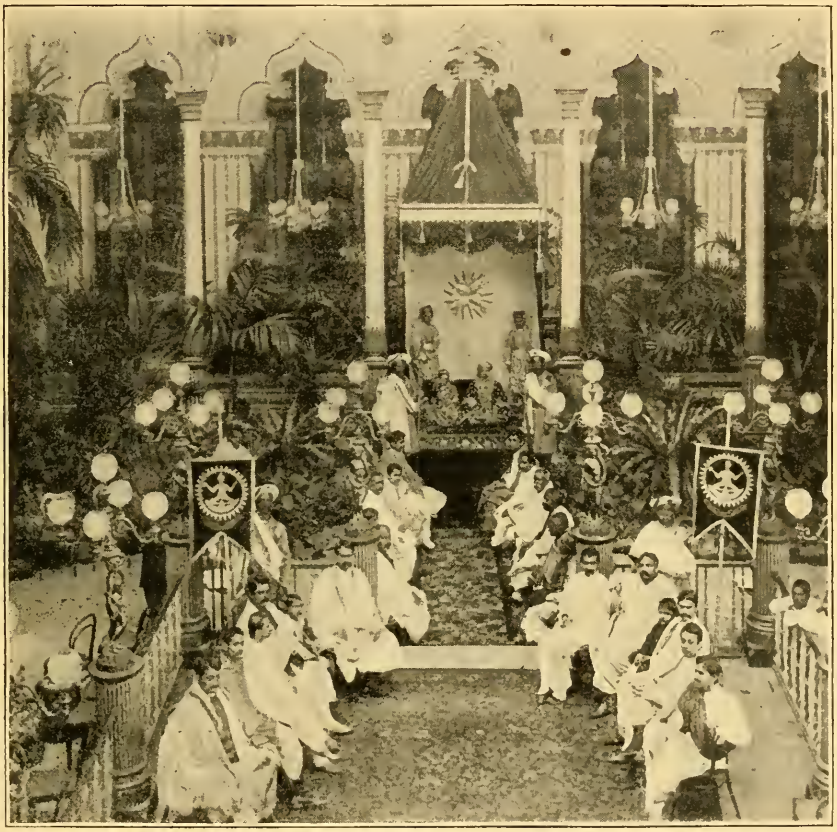
and she had caught his spirit, and was now doing all in her power to help her Bengali sisters to know and love her Saviour. She was full of sympathy and love, and her visits were a joy and help to many people besides Podo and her mother.

"The days went by, and the marriage arrangements were made. The husband chosen was a young man of about eighteen years of age, who lived in another part of the same town. Podo was not allowed to see him, but she much enjoyed the new jewellery and the new clothes that were bought for her, and the stir and excitement among the women-folk at the prospect of a wedding.

"The astrologer was consulted, and an auspicious day was chosen; and, as usual, after ten o'clock at night (for a Hindoo marriage never takes place in the day time), the first part of the wedding ceremony was gone through. Two priests, with their sacred books and holy Ganges water, were present, and the bridegroom was first brought in. He was dressed in red silk, and was carried like a baby on the barber's hips. He was seated near his would-be father-in-law, and not far from the priests, who read to him from the sacred books, and made him repeat certain phrases after them, and anointed his face with the sacred water. Then he received various presents from the bride's father. That over, he was taken to another part of the courtyard, and placed in a circle marked off by plantain leaves and sandal wood, and then seven of his friends went into the house and brought out the little bride. She was dressed in gorgeous garments—a purple silk *sari* trimmed with gold, a crimson satin jacket, and gold ornaments in her hair and round her neck and on her arms, while on her ankles there were rows of silver bells, making a pretty tinkle as she walked along.

"She was brought out sitting cross-legged on a little square board, and the seven friends took her seven times round the bridegroom, then put her down seven times and took her up seven times; and then a piece of his silk cloth was put over his head and over hers, and they had their first look at each other. The young man

probably had a sight of his little wife, but the little girl was, I am quite sure, much too shy and timid to dare to raise her eyes, and see



A HINDOO WEDDING.

what sort of a young man her husband was. She looked, oh, so tired! for the Hindoo custom is that on her wedding-day a bride must eat nothing at all until the first part of the ceremony is over,

and as this does not begin until ten o'clock at night, it cannot be finished until after twelve o'clock; and then, *for the only time in all her life*, she is allowed to eat her rice with her husband.

"The next day it was arranged for her to go to her mother-in-law's house, and to stay there a day or two, so that her new relations might get to know her a little; but she was still so very young that after her short visit she was to return to her own home, and stay with her mother for one more year before going away altogether.

"It was a very grand procession that went from Podo's father's house to that of her father-in-law. In front, in a grand carriage, sat the young bridegroom and some of his friends. Men on horseback, gaily decked elephants and camels, came next; then there was a palanquin—a kind of wooden box carried on men's shoulders by poles—in which were the bride and a little girl cousin, who was to keep her company. An old male servant, who had known Podo from a baby, walked beside the palanquin; and as both she and the cousin were such very little girls, the old man allowed them to have the door open and to look out. A noisy brass band accompanied the party. On the way they had to pass the back gate of the garden of the zenana teacher. As it was known that they were coming this way, all were on the look-out for them. When little Podo caught sight of her teacher and the rest of us standing there, like a spoilt child, as I am afraid she was, she ordered the old servant to tell the procession to stop while she spoke to her. To our surprise the old servant obeyed her, and the carriages, the elephants, the camels, the horses, the band, and the palanquin all stood still while the teacher went up to the little girl, who looked quite happy and bright, and chatted to her for a few moments, and then the old

servant ordered the procession to start again, and Podo and the little cousin were carried off.

"We hoped her new relations would be good to her, but we were glad to think that she was soon coming back home, and that we should be able to go on teaching her for another year.

"The year was nearly at an end, when one morning, as the teacher passed down the lane, she heard a noise of crying, as if

A HINDOO WIDOW.

some one were in great trouble. Thinking that the sound came from Podo's house, she went up the dark passage, and was met at the foot of the stairs by Podo's father, who said, 'Oh, it is you; come in. We are in great trouble. Podo is a widow. I have just been turning out some Hindoo friends, who only make more noise; but you may come in, and see if you can do anything to help us.'

"The teacher went upstairs, and in the room at the top found the

mother sitting on the ground, a picture of hopeless misery. She was wailing and moaning loudly; the room was untidy, her hair and her dress were all awry, and she rocked herself backwards and forwards, and moaned, 'Why, why has this evil come to us? What have we done that we should be treated so?'

"Podo was nowhere to be seen, and the mother was too much wrapt in her own grief to go near her child; but, hearing a noise in one of the adjoining rooms, the teacher went in, and found Podo lying on the floor. She had torn off all her jewels, and was banging her forehead on the ground, and crying bitterly, and saying over and over again, 'What have I done that such trouble should come to me?' After some time the teacher persuaded the mother to go to her child, and to try to comfort her, and she left them a little quieter, though still very, very sad.

"But will you wonder at their despair and fearful sorrow, when you know what it means to be a widow in India? For a little while they may keep Podo at home, and it will not be so very hard for her; but she will have to go, sooner or later, to her father-in-law's house. It means then that all her life long,—and she is only twelve years old now,—she must only have one meal a day, and she must fast every eleventh day for twenty-four hours. During that time, even in the very hottest weather, not even a drop of water may pass her lips. All her pretty jewels and *saris* must be given up—she will be allowed to wear them no more; and she must put on the plain white sheet without a border which every widow has to wear. More than that, if there are any festivities, a wedding or a feast in the mother-in-law's house, she must keep out of the way; she cannot join in anything of the kind, for she is a widow, and a sight of her face at such a time would bring ill-luck. Still more than this, in a house

it is always a widow who is the household drudge, who has to do all the things that nobody else wants to do; and all the time she has to listen to words that are far from gentle, and often even to bitter reproaches, because they say her husband's death must have been due to some fault of *hers*, if not in this life, then in some life she had lived before.

"Poor little Podo! my heart aches for her. Life seemed so bright and happy, and now it seems as if nothing but clouds were all round about her, clouds that show no sign of lifting.

"But there is one thing that sometimes cheers me when I think of her. Podo has heard of Jesus Christ, and she knows that He loves her; and I often pray that in her trouble she may turn to Him, and find the rest and peace which He alone can give.

"Will you join with me in this prayer for Podo, and for the many other little widows in India?"

The children were very quiet when auntie finished, for the story had awakened their sympathy; and the little Indian girl, so near to them in age, but whose life was so different from theirs, seemed very real to them. It was, however, just half-past six o'clock, so auntie collected the work, and promised them a story about a boy the next week; and then they thanked her, and said good-night to her and Marjorie, and went away home.

Marjorie and auntie had another good look at Crummie, and they settled that she should always stand on a little table near the sofa, because, as Marjorie said, "when people come to see me they might notice her, and perhaps put in something for the missionary work."

You can imagine what a loving kiss Marjorie had for her father when he came to see her after he got home that evening, and how

much there was to tell him. After Marjorie had gone to bed, he said to auntie: "I don't know how to thank you enough. We were getting quite disheartened. Nothing seemed to interest the little one, and the doctor says that unless she can be kept bright and happy there is little chance of her back getting permanently better, because so much depends on her general health. I have not seen her so much like her old self for weeks as she has been to-night."

And Marjorie went to sleep, saying to herself, "Poor little Podo! To be a widow in India is worse than having a bad back. I am going to try and help her and the other little girls all I can."

CHAPTER III

SOME OF INDIA'S GODS

THE next week was a very happy one to Marjorie, for on the Monday evening auntie's boxes came, and Tuesday and Wednesday were given up to unpacking. Mother and auntie knew how Marjorie would enjoy watching, so a big sheet was spread on the floor, and the boxes were brought up to the room where she lay on her sofa. What wonderful boxes those were! Besides the little Indian presents for friends that auntie had brought with her, there were many queer, and some pretty, presents that the Bengali people had given her before she started on her journey home.

One thing specially interested Marjorie. It was a little doll's cooking set, made in brass, and everything, as auntie told her, was just like the real ones that are used every day by the people. There was a little stove, a pot to boil the rice, and another for the curry, a plate, and a glass, and a big basin, into which to pour the water from the rice when it is cooked. This was very precious in auntie's eyes, for the little Hindoo girls at one of the schools had clubbed together, and bought it to show their love for her.

One part of the box auntie unpacked with great care, for she had brought some models of Indian folk, made of mud, and dressed as the people themselves dress; and these were very easily broken. Fortunately, they had travelled very well, and Marjorie was delighted when she looked at them, and thought she would know now what

WOMAN BRINGING WATER.

auntie's Indian friends were like. She was still happier when auntie said: "I brought one for you, Marjorie. You may choose first, and have for your own the one you like best."

Choosing was a long business. There was the water-carrier, with his sack made from the skin of a goat; the poor village woman, with her basket full of cow manure, which she would make into cakes and dry in the sun, and then use to light her fire; the rich Brahmin gentleman doing his daily worship, with the flowers and the Ganges sacred water in front of him; the woman coming from the river with her brass waterpot; the zenana lady, dressed all in her best, learning to make a pair of wool-work slippers for her husband; the fisherman, with his long fishing net; the poor widow woman spinning cotton; and several others.

After some time, Marjorie chose the zenana lady, for she had not forgotten little Podo in

auntie's story ; and she thought perhaps Podo had looked like that before the sad days came and she had become a widow.

There were in that box quite a number of *saris*, or Indian dresses. Some of them were white and some were brightly coloured. These auntie put aside, for, as she said to Marjorie, "One day we will

THE PROTECTRESS FROM SNAKES.

turn all the members of our 'Missionary Band' into little Indian girls, and dress them up in *saris*." And you may be quite sure Marjorie liked that idea, and hoped the time to carry it out would soon come.

But I must not stay to tell you all the things that there were in those boxes. As she took them out, one by one, many of the things reminded auntie of the people who had given them to her; and again

and again she stopped and told Marjorie and her mother a little story about some one of the many friends she had made out in India.

Everything in the boxes had travelled very well, and, when all had been examined, auntie said: "I have been much more fortunate than a friend of mine was. In some way, while he was packing his box, a cobra got in, and when he came to unpack it, there the snake lay. Fortunately, it was dead, or it would have been a very serious matter; but it had lived nearly all through the voyage, eating a temple model made of pith, which was in the same trunk, and even casting its skin while it was shut up in the box."

Marjorie rather wished auntie's box had also had a real snake in it; but her mother was not anxious to have a cobra wandering about her house.

Marjorie put her zenana lady on the table by Crummie, and looked forward to showing it to her friends when Saturday came round.

That day soon arrived, and the six little friends were all in good time; and, as soon as they had got their work, they grouped themselves round Marjorie's sofa, and began to chatter as fast as ever they could. Marjorie showed them the zenana lady, and told them some of the things auntie had told her; and then they talked of Crummie, and of how they hoped to get her quite full before auntie returned to India in the autumn.

Auntie sat and listened, and after a little while Nora turned to her and said: "Miss Grey, father says he thinks Crummie is a lovely missionary box for those who want to help the Indian people; and he said if we asked you, he knew you would tell us why it was so suitable."

Auntie smiled, and said: "Yes, it is a capital missionary box

for friends of India; and I am glad you asked the question, for the cow in India is a sacred animal, and often worshipped by the people. That is why we have put the rhyme on the card round Crummie's neck. I will try and tell you something about it. On one particular day in the year the cow is specially worshipped; then its horns and its body are painted, and it is bathed in the river. No one would dream of killing a cow or of eating beef; and I have heard a woman crying bitterly as if she had lost a little child, and when I have gone to her to ask her what was the matter, I have found out that she was crying because her cow had died.

"Another woman came to us, and said she wanted to be a Christian; so we took her into our Training Home and began to teach her. She wanted some work to do, and asked to be allowed to look after our cow. I do not think any cow ever had such a happy life; it grew so tame that it, with its calf, would follow her about everywhere like a dog. This was a little awkward sometimes, for I remember one day we were having a meeting in our *sitting-room*, when suddenly there was a knock at the door, and in walked the cow!

"This woman not only looked after the cow and tamed it, but at first she used to worship it as well. Now that she knows more about Jesus, she has left off worshipping the cow; but still, she is never so happy as when she has a cow or a little calf to look after.

"Sometimes, if a poor woman ties a calf accidentally up too tightly, and it strangles itself, she will go through a great deal of suffering and trouble in order to get forgiveness for the, to her, dreadful sin she has committed.

"One woman I met made a vow that for a whole year she would carry her baby about with a rope round its neck, and that she herself

would not speak a single word. She would go from house to house, and from village to village, begging, and every one seeing her would understand what she was doing, and give her the food she needed. Such sights make me very, very sad, and I do long for these poor ignorant people to know about Jesus and to worship Him."

THE PROTECTRESS OF CHILDREN.

All had listened well to the story of the cow, and they agreed that they were very glad that Mr. Merton had chosen such an interesting missionary box for them. Lewis said, "Are any other animals besides cows worshipped in India, Miss Grey?"

"Yes," said auntie; "cats, snakes, and monkeys, besides several other creatures, are often worshipped. The cat is sacred to the goddess of mothers, who is the guardian of little children. This

goddess is represented in pictures as a woman with a golden complexion, with a little child in her arms, and riding on a cat. No Hindoo woman would injure a cat, lest she should offend this goddess, and be made to suffer for it. A stone, about as big as a man's head, is placed under a banyan tree, and this is worshipped by the women, and said to represent the goddess. It is decorated with flowers, and offerings of rice and flowers are made to it.

"There is one goddess who is regarded as the protectress of men from snakes. Generally no image is made of her, but she is represented by the branch of a tree, a pan of water, or a snake made of mud. If an image is made, it is of a woman dressed with snakes, and standing on a snake.

"I remember one woman, who had become a Christian, telling me that in the village hut, where she lived as a girl, snakes were worshipped. There was a hole in the mud floor of the hut; down this the cobras lived, and every day a pan of milk was put at the top of the hole for their food. These cobras are most dangerous creatures—a bite from them is almost always fatal; but there they were kept, and regularly fed and worshipped.

"But perhaps one of the most sacred animals is the monkey. *Hanuman* was a great monkey-leader who helped *Ram*, a great Indian king, to conquer the giant king of Ceylon. He had the name *Hanuman* given him because, when quite young, he fell on a rock and broke his cheek, and so was given this name, which means the 'long-jawed one.' The story says that *Hanuman* discovered where the giant had put the queen, *Ram's* wife, whom he had stolen. It was in Ceylon, but the difficulty was to get the king's great army across the water between India and Ceylon, and the king was almost in despair. Then the monkey-leader came again to the rescue, and

in five days he and the other monkeys made a bridge over which the army marched, and *Hanuman* carried the king.

"Then, again, in the fighting the king was seriously injured, but the monkey-leader knew of some healing herbs, which grew on the

HANUMAN, THE MONKEY GOD.

Himalaya Mountains, right away in North India, and in a very short time he had fetched them and healed the king.

"They say very funny things in their sacred books about this *Hanuman*. They say, 'He is perfect; no one equals him in learning, or in ascertaining the sense of their Scriptures.' He is considered to be a god, and is much worshipped in some parts of India.

Living monkeys are regarded as his representatives. Hence many temples swarm with them, and it is considered an act of merit to feed them, but very wicked to injure or kill any one of them."

There was no time for any more stories, for it was five o'clock, and tea was quite ready; so they all stopped working and gathered round the table. There was plenty to talk about, and auntie was kept quite busy answering the many questions which had been suggested by the afternoon's conversation. Tea over and cleared away, they all settled down again, ready to hear the story of an Indian boy which auntie had promised them.

CHAPTER IV

A LITTLE GIPSY BOY

"IN England, in the country lanes in summer time, we often see the gipsy vans, and the gipsy folk who live in the vans, and wander about the country in them, selling baskets, and brushes, and things of that kind.

"In India, too, there are so-called *gipsies*. They belong for the most part to the north-west portion of the country, and the language which they speak is a kind of Hindustanee. They travel about all over North India. There seem to be three tribes of them, and though, as a rule, only two or three families travel together, yet once a year, in the autumn time, all the members of a tribe have to meet at some appointed place. There they settle their disputes, punish offenders, celebrate feasts, perform their marriages, and fix the place of meeting for the next year. Then they separate, and wander away again all over the country.

"The people belonging to one of the tribes are Mohammedans; but neither they, nor either of the other gipsy tribes, which are Hindoo, seem to know much about the religion which they profess. The people of one tribe keep buffaloes, and they boast that they can cure rheumatism by drawing out blood from the affected part of the patient. Those of another tribe, who are Hindoos, keep horses, and weave baskets. They are very particular about eating no food, save

that which is cooked by themselves, and in their own peculiar fashion. The members of the third tribe keep donkeys, and they will eat anything that they can find, even dogs, cats, and, they say, the flesh of dead animals. I have heard that sometimes they have been known to eat the flesh of dead men, but I don't at all like to believe that.

"All these gipsies are thieves, more or less; and many of them are snake-charmers, and jugglers, too. I am sure you would enjoy watching the curious doings of the snake-charmers, who come round to the houses with large baskets, which have in them large poisonous snakes, which are known as 'cobras.'

"A man begins by playing on a kind of pipe, which makes a whistling sound; then another man opens the baskets, and as soon as the cobras hear the music, they begin to rear up their heads, and sway their bodies backwards and forwards, as if they tried to keep time to the music. They seem quite satisfied with listening to and enjoying the music, and they do not seem disposed to make an attack on any one; but I must say I am always glad when I see them put away safely in their baskets again, and carried off by their gipsy owners.

"If people suspect there is a poisonous snake hidden anywhere in their house, and they are unable to find it and to catch it, they send for one of these snake-charmers, and by playing his music, he is sure to attract it to come out of its hiding-place.

"Just before I left India a rich Hindoo gentleman thought there was a cobra somewhere in his house; but he and his servants failed to find it, so he sent for a snake-charmer. The man came, and by his music he soon attracted the snake. He caught hold of it by its tail, swung it round, and made it feel somewhat dazed, and then

he put it into an earthenware pot which he had with him, fastening something over the mouth so that it could not glide out and escape. Then he turned to the people round,—for a good many men had come in to watch him,—and boasted that he could do anything with a snake. So one of the onlookers dared him to take the cobra out of the pot and put it back again. He agreed to try, but in doing it the cobra bit him. Then the folks round were very frightened, and one of them said he would go quickly for a doctor; but the snake-charmer replied, 'No, it will be all right'; and he began to eat a piece of a leaf of some kind that he had with him, and to say over and over again some kind of prayer; but it was all of no avail, for the poor man died in about half an hour. So you see the snake-charmers cannot always do just as they like with the snakes.

"I have told you a little bit about these gipsy people, because to-day I want to tell you about a little gipsy boy that I have learned to love, and I want to make you love him too.

"One day, now some six years ago, I had a letter from the superintendent of our prison at Berhampur, in which he said that there was a gipsy woman in the prison who had done something very wrong indeed, and would have to stay in the prison for another two and a half years. She had with her a tiny boy who was about four years old. The prison was not a good place for the little lad to live in, so he asked us if *we* would take care of the boy until his mother was set free again. We agreed to do so; and I shall not soon forget one morning going on to the verandah, and seeing a tall constable with a red turban on his head, holding by the hand a tiny boy. The little fellow was nice and clean, but he looked very frightened, and clung to the constable, who had evidently been treating him kindly. But

the frightened look soon passed away, for in our house there were several other little boys for him to play with, and he had good food and kind care every day. He soon showed that he was a real little gipsy boy, for he was up to all kinds of mischief; but he was a very loving little fellow, and had a sweet little voice for singing. His

BENIE AND HIS FRIENDS.

name was Benie, and before he had been with us very long we had all grown very fond of him. He was such a funny little boy. One day, when he was about five years old, I had been showing him and the others some pictures in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and telling them the stories connected with the pictures. A little while after-

wards I went to a box, in order to turn out some wool, which was kept in the box tied up in large bags. Just as I had turned the bags on to the floor, Benie appeared, and seeing them, he shouted out to the other children, 'Come, come; brothers all; here is where the mother keeps her sin burdens!' They were in shape something like the bundle on Christian's back in the picture, and the little fellow thought they were mine, put carefully away in the box.

"As the time drew near for his mother to come out of prison, we felt very anxious, for we could not bear to think of the little lad going back to a gipsy life, and being taught to steal, and lie, and do all kinds of bad things. At first it seemed all right. The mother, when she came out of prison, came straight to us, and agreed to stay with us and be taught. We found then that she was not really his mother, but his aunt, and she had taken care of him from the time he was a baby, and evidently she loved him very much, and for a time, for his sake, she tried hard to do right and to learn. But the gipsy craving for freedom proved too much for her, and one day she ran away from us; no one knew where she went to, but she left Benie with us.

"For a few weeks we heard nothing more of her, and then, one day, four or five gipsies appeared in the porch of our house. They were a queer-looking lot of people, and danced about and sang as soon as they saw us. Then a man came up, and, in a queer language, made us understand that he was Benie's father, and wanted to take him away. We told him he must bring us a written paper from the superintendent of the prison, as *he* had sent the child to us; and all too soon the man brought the paper, and our dear little Benie had to go. Poor little laddie! How he did cry when we said good-bye to him! The aunt was there, and she took him with her, and we asked her to bring him to us sometimes. She did so, and every time he

came the bonnie, merry little fellow looked more miserable and more dirty, and less like his old self. We could do nothing, but it did make our hearts ache to see him, and we prayed constantly to our Father in heaven to save the little lad that we had learned to love so well.

"We were constantly hearing of thefts which these gipsy people were committing, and we knew that the police were watching them very closely.

"One day Benie's father met me when I was out walking, and said that he would sell me Benie for ninety rupees. He said that the boy was not happy, and he was quite willing to let me have him. Of course I refused to buy him, for it would never do for missionaries to begin buying children, and so nothing further could be done. But a week or two later the father came to see me, and said that the police had ordered them to leave the neighbourhood, and it was not convenient to take the child, especially as he was not happy, so I could have him altogether for nothing if I liked.

"You may be quite sure I *did* like, and so did Benie; and after he had had a warm bath, and had put on some clean clothes, he looked more like his old self, though he was still so thin, and had such a scared and frightened look in his brown eyes. He did not talk much about his gipsy experiences. I think the women-folk were kind to him in their own way, but he told us, with great disgust, that one day they caught a cat and cooked it, and wanted him to eat some of it.

"We have never seen those gipsy people since then, but for a long time Benie used to start and hide away if he saw any strange people, especially if they were dressed in the same way as the gipsies.

"But he is a big boy now, ten years old, and he goes to school, and he has, I believe, quite forgotten his time among the gipsies. I think, too, he is trying to be a good boy, and I hope some day he will be a

BENIE AND OTHER SCHOOLBOYS AT DINNER

teacher in his own country. Would it not be nice if he could go and teach his *own gipsy people* about Jesus Christ? I don't think they have any one to teach them as it is. I like to hope that some day our

Benie may be a missionary to the poor neglected and degraded Indian gipsy folk, for they too might come to love the Lord Jesus, and trust Him as their Saviour, if they know Him as you and I do."

When auntie had finished, "Crummie" was passed round, and each child put in something, and before they left, auntie suggested that during the week they should each try to find some way in which they could earn money to help the missionary work, in addition to their own pence; adding, "We will wait till later to decide to what special object you will like to give it; but let us all work hard, so that we may be able to help as much as ever we possibly can."

Then "good-nights" were said, and all went away home with a good deal to think over and to talk about.

CHAPTER V

THE MISSION BOAT

THE next Saturday came in due time. It was a very wet day, but as none of them had far to come, all the children managed to get to the meeting.

After the usual chat, when every one was able to go on with his or her work, auntie said,—"I expect this week you have all been thinking of ways in which you can help the missionary work. Shall we go round and tell each other what we have planned to do? Nora is the eldest—suppose she begins."

"I talked to mother about it," said Nora, "and she says if I like to get up half an hour earlier every morning and dust the drawing-room, she will give me a penny a week. I don't like getting up, but I am going to try and see if I cannot help."

Phyllis was the next, and she too had consulted her mother, with the result that she was to have a halfpenny for every pair of stockings she mended. She could darn very neatly, and as she had several big brothers, there was always plenty of darning to be done; but hitherto Phyllis had preferred to read an interesting story-book when lessons were done, and had not thought of helping her mother in that way.

Muriel and Doris were sitting close together, as they always did, and as usual it was Muriel who spoke for them both. "Mother

wants us to learn to sew nicely, and she says she will give us a halfpenny for every cloth or duster we hem. We don't like needlework, but we want to help to get 'Crummie' quite full."

Marjorie had looked rather sad as the others spoke of what they hoped to do; but she had had a talk with mother and auntie, and

NORA.

mother had promised her a penny a week for "Crummie," until she could do something to earn one for herself.

Then came the turn of the boys, and Bernard said: "I asked mother, and my sisters, and one or two other friends, and they have promised that when they have a letter to send to any one not too far away, they will let me deliver it instead of posting it, and give me the penny that they would have had to pay for the stamp. I hope

they will have heaps of letters, especially on Saturdays. I want to help to teach the little fellows like the Benie you told us of last week."

BERNARD.

Only Lewis was left, and he too had been very energetic. He said: "I went to father, and to Uncle Tom, and to Aunt Annie, and

they promised to let me come and weed their gardens on Saturday afternoons, and to pay me as they would a weeding boy. I hope somebody will want me every Saturday, and the rain will come on the other days, so that I can get a good lot for our 'Crummie' missionary box."

Auntie was delighted to see how heartily the children had taken up her suggestion, and wished them all success in carrying out their plans.

Then she brought out some of her curios, and told them about them as they sat and worked and listened. Then after tea came the usual story.

"I daresay you know that our great Missionary Society owns a steamer, and quite a fleet of smaller boats, and these are used for carrying the missionaries from one place to another, as they go about giving their message to all the people that can in any way be reached.

"Through the district in which I have been working for some years there runs a great river, which is really a part of the sacred Ganges. All along the banks of this river, on either side, the villages are thickly strewn.

"We have had one of these Missionary Boats; it was called the *Jessie*, and it was large enough for us to live in for a week or two at a time, when we wanted to go up or down the river, and visit the people who dwell in these villages.

"The *Jessie* was a kind of 'house-boat,' such as there are on the upper Thames. There was one cabin, and this had wide seats on either side. On these we could sit when we were inside the

cabin in the daytime, sheltered from the sunshine, and on these we could sleep, with more or less comfort, in the night-time. If three people were travelling in the *Jessie*, we filled up the space between the seats with boards, which were made to fit, and then three people could sleep comfortably side by side, though there was certainly no room to spare. There were venetian shutters all round the cabin, and in the night we found it very pleasant to open these shutters, and enjoy the cool air that came off the water. Under the seats there were cupboards, some of them containing the crockery we used, and some of them the ropes, and sails, and other things that were used in managing the boat. There was a tiny dressing-room off this cabin, and in that room there was a tiny window-door which looked on to the place where the cooking was done. Through this window-door the cook had to jump every time he brought any food to those who were travelling in the boat.

"The roof of the cabin was flat, and when we were travelling on the river we found it very pleasant to sit on this flat roof in the evening, and watch what was being done on the banks as we glided along. On this roof, at night, the boatmen made a kind of tent with a tarpaulin, and under the shelter of this they slept. It took four men to manage the boat. These men are called *māgis*, and all belong to the boatman caste. They do not wear much clothing, and they are very particular about no one coming near their food when they are cooking or eating; but they are, as a whole, a merry, happy set of men, clever with their fingers. Some of them can sew quite nicely, and many of them net beautifully, making quite large fishing nets to catch fish, and so get a relish to eat with their very simple meal of rice and *dāl* (a kind of lentil).

"But you will say: 'How does the boat get moved along?' Some-

times in one way, sometimes in another. When there is plenty of wind the sail is put up, and we sail along quite fast; but when

A BATHING-PLACE ON THE GANGES.

there is no wind, the men either row or *goon*. Where they *goon*, two ropes are tied to the top of the mast, and two of the men

take the other ends of the ropes, which are twisted round thick pieces of bamboo, and then they go on shore, and, walking forward on the bank, drag the boat along. Sometimes these ropes get entangled in the masts of other boats, and it is often some time before they can be got free again; and sometimes the poor men have to walk over country that is quite dangerous, because of the poisonous snakes that are found there. I remember once seeing two men on the bank running very quickly, and I asked the man who was steering why they were hurrying so. He replied: 'That part has so many bad snakes that they are afraid, and want to get away as quickly as possible.'

"To-day I am going to tell you of a journey which I once made, in company with one of our teachers, in this boat the *Jessie*. We were away from home just one week, and we went right down the river as far as Plassey, the place where once a great battle was fought. It is some thirty miles from Berhampur. It took two nights and one day and a half to get there, for the river was very full, and the currents were very strong, and so the men would not venture far during the night-time.

"When we arrived, we found the old battlefield was about five minutes' walk from the river. It used to be quite close,—on the bank, in fact,—but since those days the river has somewhat changed its course. We went up to the battlefield, and found an obelisk to mark the spot, and all around it a dirty and unhealthy village.

"It was ten years since the women residing there had been visited by any missionary, and at first they were quite frightened when they saw us coming. But we got into one courtyard, and the people there asked us to sit down, and they listened quietly while we sang to them a Bengali hymn. Just as we were begin-

ning to explain what it was that we had sung, a man, evidently belonging to the household, came in, and talked so much, and tried to argue so much, that our audience of women soon melted away. This man had heard something of Christ, but he refused to take a gospel and read for himself. Altogether we felt that this was rather a disappointing morning, for in another house we did not get many women. We were on our way back to the boat, tired and discouraged, and wondering what we could do to reach those poor neglected heathen women, when we noticed a larger court-yard than the rest, which was quite near to the battlefield site. It seemed to be very clean; but what struck us more especially was a kind of grotto in one corner of the court, on which there were many roughly-made mud animals, such as horses, dogs, birds, and there was an elephant, too, I believe. We went into it, and found there was a man in charge. In answer to our questions he said: "This is the place where the women from this village, and from another near, come every Thursday afternoon to worship; these mud animals are thankofferings which they have brought for their recovery from sickness, or for any special mercy which has come to them."

"We thanked him for his information, and went on to the boat to breakfast, for it was getting late, and the sun was very hot. But as it was the Thursday, we decided to go to this place again in the afternoon, and see what the women did, and, if we possibly could, get some chance of speaking to them.

"We went at the appointed time, and found the courtyard full of women. They were standing in the yard, and there were some fifty of them. They were behaving in a very quiet and orderly manner. As soon as they saw us, one of them fetched a mat, and

requested us to sit down on it. They told us that they each brought the priest some milk, and told him their heart's desire, and then he prayed for them. This priest had a little brass pot of milk on his head, and he walked round and round the shrine, each time more quickly than the time before. It made us quite giddy to watch him. Then, suddenly, he took the pot of milk off his head, and threw himself down in front of the shrine, and all the women did the same. Then their worship was supposed to be over, but they were all ready to stay and listen, while we spoke to them of the Father in heaven and His great love to them.

"The audience we had that afternoon quite made up for our disappointment in the morning, and we left these women, glad and thankful because we had been able to speak to so many, but sorry because it was not possible for us to stay among them, and go on with the work of teaching them.

"Then we continued our journey, and visited other villages. Everywhere we found women who had never even heard of Christ, but yet were quite willing to listen to us as we tried to talk to them.

"At night-time, when we anchored near a village, we could hear the bells ringing for the false idol worship. Everywhere the poor Hindoo women seemed to know, or to believe, that they must *do* something to get rid of their sins. They thought what was needed was that they should bathe in the holy Ganges River, or go on a pilgrimage to some holy place.

"In the early mornings the people from the villages came down to bathe in the river. I remember watching one old man, who stood in the water for quite a long time, and chanted over and over again praises to the river. The Hindoos think this river is a

goddess, and so they worship it. It was like this in every village that we visited; the people were everywhere so ignorant, and yet they were so willing to hear us speak about Christ.

"Won't you each pray that the time may soon come when every

A BENGAL VILLAGE.

man and woman and child will know that Jesus loves them, and leave off this idol worship, and follow Him?

"If it were not for the help of such boats as the *Jessie* we should be able to visit these scattered and distant villages much less often

than we do now; so we are very thankful to have a mission boat, and very grateful to the boys and girls who every year collect money to maintain the *Jessie*, and pay the boatmen's wages, and also to keep in good use the steamer, and the other ships and boats, which are in constant use in other parts of the world, and are doing much the same kind of service.

"Unfortunately, last year it was found that the *Jessie* was growing very old, and its timbers were too rotten to make it safe to travel far in her, and we were wondering how we could get a new boat, when a good friend of our Society offered to give us one. It is to be called the *Mardie* instead of the *Jessie*, and it will be a little larger, so that instead of only three people being able to live and travel in it, six can be accommodated, and so double the work be done."

CHAPTER VI

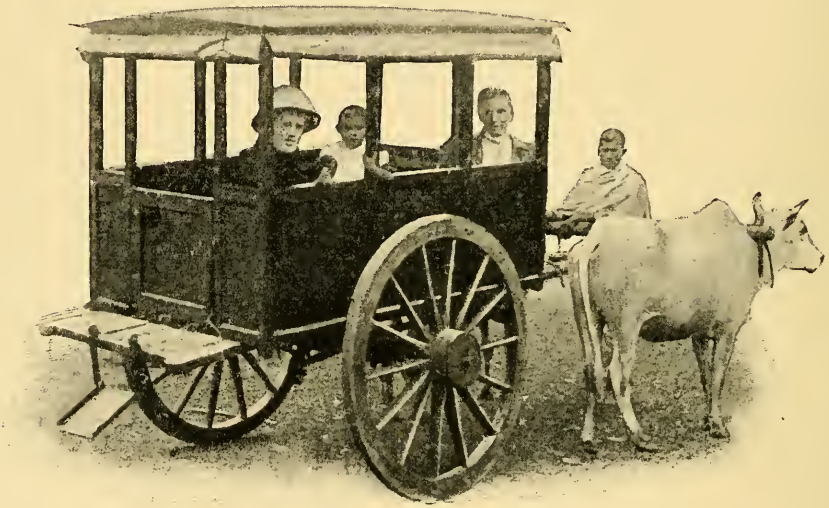
THE BULLOCK-CART

'TRAVELLING in the boat is not the only way we have of getting at the villagers. Some of the villages are at long distances from the river, and to them we can only go in our bullock-cart. Here is a picture of it, and I am sure you will think it looks a very queer and rough kind of carriage. I must admit that it is, but we would not be without our bullock-cart for anything. It is quite true that it goes very slowly, and that there are no seats in it, and that there is a good deal of uncomfortable jolting; but then, you see, we can use it where the roads are very bad, and we could not safely walk, or get to the villages by any other sort of conveyance.

"We can even turn our bullock-cart into a bed, and sleep in it all night. It is fairly comfortable, and better than nothing.

"How would you like to camp out near a village one night? You would have your bullocks taken out of the cart and tethered to a tree; your dinner would be cooked under the tree by the bullock-cart driver, who, being a Christian man, does not mind what he does to help. Then perhaps you would have a bit of pleasant talk with some other folk who are also camping near, or with some visitors from the village, who are curious to know why you are there. Then you would have to get inside the cart, let

down the curtains, lie down on the floor, on a mat over some straw, and try to sleep. The driver lies down underneath the cart, so that the heavy dew may not injure him, and the bullocks sleep near by, safely fastened to the trees, and all is quiet.



OUR BULLOCK-CART.

"On the night of which I am thinking just now, neither the teacher nor I could get much sleep, for as soon as everybody and everything became quiet the *mosquitoes* woke up. Unknown to us our camp had been fixed too near a pond, and these wretched creatures tormented us till daylight as only mosquitoes can.

"But I think you will like to hear about an interesting journey which some friends of mine once took in this same bullock-cart. I was not with them on that occasion, but as they told me all

about it, I will try and pass the story on to you as correctly as I can.

"The headman[1] of a village about eight miles from Berhampur asked these friends of mine to visit *his* village, and he offered to lend them a room if they would stay the night. So early one morning, in the cool weather, the two English ladies and a teacher started off in the bullock-cart. Their way led them again and again across ploughed fields, and where there was a road it was very rough, full of ridges and holes, so there was a good deal of most uncomfortable jolting. In a short time they came to a piece of water which had to be crossed. There was a ferry-boat on it, in shape something like an English rowing-boat, only instead of being hollow in the part where we have seats, there were bamboo-poles closely put together, and laid across the boat from side to side, making a kind of rough platform. The ladies had to get out of the bullock-cart, and sit down on a part of this bamboo floor; then the cart was pulled on to it, and then the bullocks were led on by their driver, and, when the load was complete, the boat was rowed across. On the other side of the water there was a tiny village, and there they decided to have a picnic-breakfast before continuing their journey. All their food for the two days they had to carry with them. Very soon their kettle boiled, and they had their meal, watched by a small crowd of villagers, who had come out to see the *strange* way in which the English people eat. Probably none of them had ever seen any one eat with a spoon and fork before, for the Indian people always use their fingers, and they are so skilful that they need nothing else.

[1] In every Bengali village there is one man who has a good deal of influence, and is looked upon by the villagers as the headman.

"Breakfast over, the missionaries continued their journey. They crossed another piece of water, and in the afternoon arrived at the village to which they were invited. They were welcomed most

A NATIVE BULLOCK-CART.

cordially by the headman, and taken to his courtyard. Some small boys, who had evidently never seen a white lady before, were very frightened, and ran away crying, 'What shall we do! What shall

we do!' Soon some fifty men had gathered round, and they asked them to sing and talk to them. They fetched some stools for the ladies to sit on, and then the missionaries sang altogether, and one

A BIBLEWOMAN.

of them talked for a while to the men, ending by saying that they had brought the magic lantern with them to show to the women, and would like to be permitted to do so when it got dark. The headman said he would be pleased for the women to see it, but

added, 'We men would like to see it too, so you must show it to us first, and then you may show it to the women.'

"This was decided on, and then, feeling that they needed a little rest after their long and hot journey, as a preparation for the hard work of the evening, the missionaries asked if they might go for an hour to the room that had been prepared for them. The headman took them to it, and brought out a dirty-looking pad to serve for a bed, and two pillows equally black; and these he put on a native bedstead, which is only a flat piece of wood, supported by four short legs.

"None of the party felt very much inclined to rest there, especially as they had their own bedding with them; but the man seemed so disposed to be friendly that they could not hurt his feelings. They managed, therefore, to rest on the bed for a little while. Then they made a cup of tea, and after it went out and had some more singing and talking. Just before dusk they went round to every house, in order to invite the women to come to see the magic lantern later on. At dusk they returned to the headman's courtyard, put up the sheet, and arranged the lantern. The pictures illustrated the life and teachings of Christ, and those men *did* look earnestly, and listen well, as the pictures were one by one thrown on the sheet, and explained to them. When they had all been seen, the ladies said, 'Now we will go to the women'; but the men said, 'No, we have enjoyed it all so much that we should like to see all those pictures over again before you go to the women.' There was nothing for it but to have them all over again, and then the men went away, and the sheet and lantern were taken to another courtyard, where a good number of women were already waiting.

A BIBLEWOMAN'S HOME.

"Just before they began to show the pictures, one of the missionaries saw a woman go to a corner of the courtyard and kneel down before a tiny tree,—a sacred tree,—and then light a little lamp, and put it down by the side of the tree, making a screen with some matting. Most likely the poor woman did that every day, for it was a part of her daily worship.

"The women listened well, and it was getting quite late before the missionaries said that they must stop. Then the ladies went away to their room. This they made somewhat private by hanging up sheets, for there was only a wall to the room on three sides; the fourth was mostly open to the outside; and as they had their bedding by this time, they looked forward to a good night's rest. But those *men* who had seen the pictures were not at all ready for bed, and they sat down outside the room, and smoked and talked for hours, so that it was nearly impossible to get to sleep.

"Very early next morning the men were outside their room again, saying, 'Why are you so long? Come out.' When they came out, the men said, 'We want to hear again; we want you to have a service as you Christians have'; and there, in that heathen village, they had singing, and reading, and prayer, and speaking.

"After about an hour the missionaries stopped, and went to the other end of the village to try to get to the women. The news soon spread that they were there, and the courtyard to which they had gone was filled with women and children. After a good long talk it was time for the workers to return home, but the people, the men and the women too, did not like their leaving. They said, 'Stay, and as long as you stay we will do no work.' And they added, 'How can we serve God if we do not know any more about Him!'

"Ah! how those workers wished that they could stay! But other work was waiting for them, and they were obliged to leave what seemed so promising a field of labour."

This story was different from the two previous stories, but not the less interesting, and it was quite half-past six before auntie stopped and the little company broke up. Pictures of both bullock-cart and boat were handed round, and the children wished they could spend a holiday in auntie's country, and in the boat or cart go round with her to some of the villages. India was fast becoming something more than a mere name to Marjorie and her friends, and a real longing was started in their hearts to do something to send the story of the love of Jesus to their brothers and sisters out there.

CHAPTER VII

SO HUNGRY: THE STORY OF ĀKI AND PHĀKI

BUT Miss Grey had only come over to England for a short time, and as soon as she had got stronger, and the days grew a little warmer, she found she was often wanted to go to various parts of the country, to speak at meetings, and to tell the grown folks and the children of England about her life and work in India. And she could not but be glad that such was the case, for she wanted to help the English people, especially the boys and girls, to know and love her Indian friends; and she found it very helpful to herself to be brought into touch with those who were, though kept at home, sharing in the great work of bringing the world to Christ. She made many new friends in these visits, and though her body sometimes got tired, she rejoiced that such opportunities had been given her.

Unfortunately, this outside work often kept her away on a Saturday, and for that she was very sorry, though Mrs. Merton took her place, and did all she could to make it a happy time for the children.

Sometimes she found time to write out a story, and leave it with Mrs. Merton to read aloud; and sometimes a story was chosen from *News from Afar*, not always about India, for both Mrs. Merton and Miss Grey were anxious that the children should

understand how large the world is, and how many people there are of all colours and languages and religions who have never heard of Christ, but who need to be taught of His love and salvation.

News from Afar was much appreciated by all the members of the Band, and very soon each family represented requested to be allowed to take it in, and so be able to read it all through for themselves.

During one of auntie's absences from home, the doctor came to see Marjorie. She had then been lying on her back for three months. The doctor was a kind old gentleman, and Marjorie was not at all afraid of him. He sat down beside her, before examining the poor back, and began to chat to her brightly. Soon his eyes fell on "Crummie," and, once started, Marjorie had lots to tell him about the "Missionary Band" and auntie's stories of the Indian children far away. Then came the examination, and it was not very comfortable for Marjorie to bear; but when it was over, the doctor turned to her mother, and said, "She has got on better than I expected; you will have to be very careful with her for a time, but I hope eventually she will quite outgrow the delicacy." And turning to Marjorie, he said, "I think auntie and 'Crummie' between them have done a great deal towards making you better. I should like to give 'Crummie' a present,'" and he put into Marjorie's hand a half-sovereign. You know how pleased Marjorie was; and before he left the doctor told Mrs. Merton he should like Marjorie to begin sitting up every day for a little while; at first only for an hour at a time, and gradually longer, adding, "She may work or draw if she likes, while she is sitting up."

If you had been obliged to lie on your back for three months you would understand what it meant to our little friend to hear these words of the doctor, and her father and mother too were not less pleased and happy.

Auntie was expected home on the Saturday in time for the Band meeting, so Marjorie begged mother not to write and tell her the good news, because she wanted to surprise her. And auntie was surprised, and glad and thankful too, to see Marjorie sitting up; so were the other children, and they had a very happy meeting. After tea, when the sitting-up time was over, and Marjorie was lying down again, and resting, auntie told them the following story:—

"In a village situated about two miles from my Indian home, we had a school for little girls. The schoolhouse was a queer little building. I am afraid you might have mistaken it for a cow-shed if you had seen it, for it was not nearly so grand as many an English stable. It had a framework of bamboos, the walls were made of mud, and it had a thatched roof; but there were no desks and no tables and no chairs inside. These articles of furniture were quite unnecessary. The mud, raised a foot all round the walls, made a capital seat for the children, who I told you have a comfortable way of sitting cross-legged, something as English tailors do when they are at their work; and for the teacher there was a little cane stool, and a small box which was locked, in which she kept the slates and books and pencils.

"The scholars were mostly little girls, but a few small boys were admitted, who lived in the village near by. The children's homes looked very much like the schoolhouse; but one or two of

the fathers had been able to build two or three of these little huts round an open courtyard, and in these they and their families, and a few cows and fowls and goats, all lived together. The families, too, have no furniture in their huts, and I am afraid I must tell you that they are not very clean. They do not wear

A VILLAGE SCHOOL.

many clothes, but I am sorry to have to say, that though the one garment they do wear ought to be white, it is sadly too often nearly black with dirt and neglect.

"These people are not Hindoos, and they do not worship idols. They are Mohammedans. But this does not mean that they are really any better off, for they are all very ignorant, and especially

the women. Many of them do not want to hear anything about Jesus the Saviour, and they do not care about sending their girls to school, for they think the only use of a girl or a woman is to cook the food and to wait upon the men.

"But twelve little girls came pretty regularly to our school. Such funny little maids they were; I wish you could see them. The eldest was about nine or ten years old, and the youngest was about three. But all of them had their hair well greased and done up in a tight knob on the tops of their heads; and those who were married,—for some of these little girls were married,—had a bright red mark painted along the parting near the forehead. They all wore a lot of cheap jewellery: bracelets made of sealing wax of all colours; great big rings in their ears and noses, often with one or two imitation pearl beads on them; necklaces round their necks; and anklets,—often very heavy ones,—on their feet. For clothing, each had a little *sari*, but they liked best to fasten this round their waists, and so leave the upper parts of their bodies quite bare.

"The teacher was a village woman herself. She lived in a house very much like theirs, but some years before she had heard of Jesus Christ, and had learned to love Him, and now she was spending her old age in teaching these little girls about Him, and about His love to them. The teacher could not teach them very much, and I am afraid that very few of them learned even to read or to write very nicely. The Bengali language is very difficult, and it calls for a lot of patience and perseverance; but the little folk learned to sing hymns to the queer Bengali tunes, to repeat texts of Scripture, and they got to know something about the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Āki and Phāki were two of these little girls; their mother was a widow, and very poor, but she sent her little ones to the school pretty regularly. Āki was about six years old, and Phāki about four.

"Four years ago there was a dreadful famine in India, and the people in this village, and in many others, suffered very much. We tried to help them all we could; and every morning a crowd of poor women used to come to us, and they would do any work that we could find for them, in order to earn a few pence, with which to buy some food for themselves and their children.

"None of them were very clever, but we set them to fetch a certain number of jars of water from the river, or to grind some corn, or to do some other little household duty, and then, when they had finished, and were ready for a rest before starting home, we spoke to them about the Father in heaven, and about His care and love at all times. They all listened well, and sometimes we saw the tears come into their eyes, but they did not say much. Āki and Phāki's mother used to come very regularly, and though she too said very little, I believe the good seed sank into her heart.

"Before the famine time was quite over she died very suddenly, and her last words were: 'Take my two little girls to the English lady, and ask her to keep them and love them and train them.' Don't you think that really meant she wanted them to be taught about the Father in heaven, of whom she had heard? I do.

"So they were brought to me, and I was glad to have them to love and train. But the gladness did not last long. That same evening I was told that a man was on our verandah waiting to see me. I went out to him and he said, 'I have come for

Āki and Phāki; I am their uncle, and I must have them.' I told him of their mother's last wish, and that I was quite ready to take them, and be good to them, and I asked him if he had come because he loved them and did not want to part with them. But he replied, 'No, not at all; I have come because the people

ĀKI AND PHĀKI.

in my village say, if I let the Christians have the children, they will not allow me to eat with them, or to worship in their mosque,[1] and I cannot stand that, so give me the children.'

"He was their nearest relation, and so I could do nothing, and I had sadly to watch him walk away with the little ones.

"I said I could do nothing, but that is not quite true, for I could

[1] A mosque is a Mohammedan chapel.

do what Peter's friends did when he was in prison; you know what that was, and that is what we and all our teachers did.

"The days went by; a week, eight days, ten days, and a fortnight had almost gone when, one afternoon, as I came home from my work, I saw, standing in the porch, two of the most wretched, miserable little girls I have ever seen. They were so thin and so dirty, and they had nothing at all on their bodies but some old rags, and at first I wondered whoever they could be, and what they wanted there. But as I got nearer, the bigger one rushed up to me, and said, 'We have come back, and we are never going away any more'; and then I saw that they were Āki and Phāki.

"It did not take me long to bring them into the house, and give them a nice bath and some clean clothes, and you may be sure that they soon looked very different children. That cruel uncle had not fed them properly; he had sent them out to beg, and what they got by their begging was all the food they had been able to get. So, at last, being unable to bear it any longer, they had run away,—some two long miles in the blazing sunshine,—and they had come back to us. The uncle did not trouble us again. He knows quite well where they are, but he does not want them.

"At first they were very shy, but soon they began to feel at home, for there were a good many little ones for them to play with, and the good food they had to eat, and the love and care that surrounded them, soon made them look and feel very different creatures.

"Now Āki is busy with her lessons; she is a dear, patient little girl, anxious to get on, and she will, I believe, do very well at school. Little Phāki, too, has a bit of school work now and then,

but she finds it very hard to sit still, because she is one of the merriest little souls it is possible to meet anywhere. Her laugh is quite infectious, and she is always ready for any bit of fun that may come in her way.

"Are you not glad we were able to get Āki and Phāki, and that they are being cared for and taught about Jesus? Perhaps, some day, when they are grown up, they will be able to teach some of their brown sisters the things which they have learned themselves.

"But I want you to remember that there are hundreds of little girls in India like Āki and Phāki, but there is nobody to care for them, and nobody to teach them, as we are trying to teach *these* little girls."

CHAPTER VIII

A BLIND BRAHMIN BOY

ALL this time auntie had not seen Rex, but it was near the Easter holidays, and he was expected home from school for a few weeks. Marjorie was full of excitement as the day drew near, and auntie too—with whom Rex had always been a great favourite, and who had a very soft corner in her heart for any boy—was much looking forward to seeing him again.

He arrived in the evening, a great tall lad, full of fun and mischief, but with an open, honest face, and with a good school record behind him. You can guess how glad he was to find Marjorie sitting up, and what a lot they had to tell each other. He admired "Crummie" enough even to please Marjorie, and promised to come to the Band meeting the next Saturday. And now the house was lively indeed; always singing and whistling to be heard on the stairs; doors opening and shutting in a breezy fashion; and yet Marjorie rarely felt out of it all, for Rex found and made time constantly to go to his little sister, and sit with her and tell her stories, or read to her, or let her tell him of the things that interested her.

Saturday came round, and in the morning the new number of the *News from Afar* was brought to the house. Marjorie seized it at once, and while reading it suddenly said, "Oh, Rex, Saturday

week is the Children's 'Demonstration' at Exeter Hall; you know we went last year. Do ask auntie to take Nora and Phyllis and the others with her this year."

Rex, who was reading in the room, looked up, and said, "Do you really mean it, Margie? It is on Saturday afternoon, and if your friends and auntie go, you will be left at home, for you can't go this year, and I must go to help auntie take care of them."

But Marjorie was learning to be unselfish, and she said, "Yes, Rex; they have none of them ever been, and you and auntie will tell me all about it when you come back."

Rex spoke to his mother and auntie about Marjorie's suggestion and auntie said she would mention it to the children that afternoon.

As usual they all came, and Rex made himself very useful in helping the little boys with their scrap-books, and in mounting some texts on coloured cards. These texts auntie was planning to use as decorations for the walls of her schools when she got back to India.

Auntie told the children about the "Demonstration," and said that all who would like to go with her must consult their parents and bring her word next week.

The story she had chosen for that afternoon was about the work of a doctor in India, and as soon as the tea had been cleared away she began.

"A poor old woman lay dying in a wretched little hut, situated in a dirty lane, in a certain village in North India. The little hut was built of mud, and it had a low tiled roof; there was very little furniture inside it, but outside there lay a pile of wood put

ready to be used in burning the woman's body as soon as she was dead. Besides suffering from a very painful disease, she had lain so long in bed, uncared for and untended, that she had bad sores on her body.

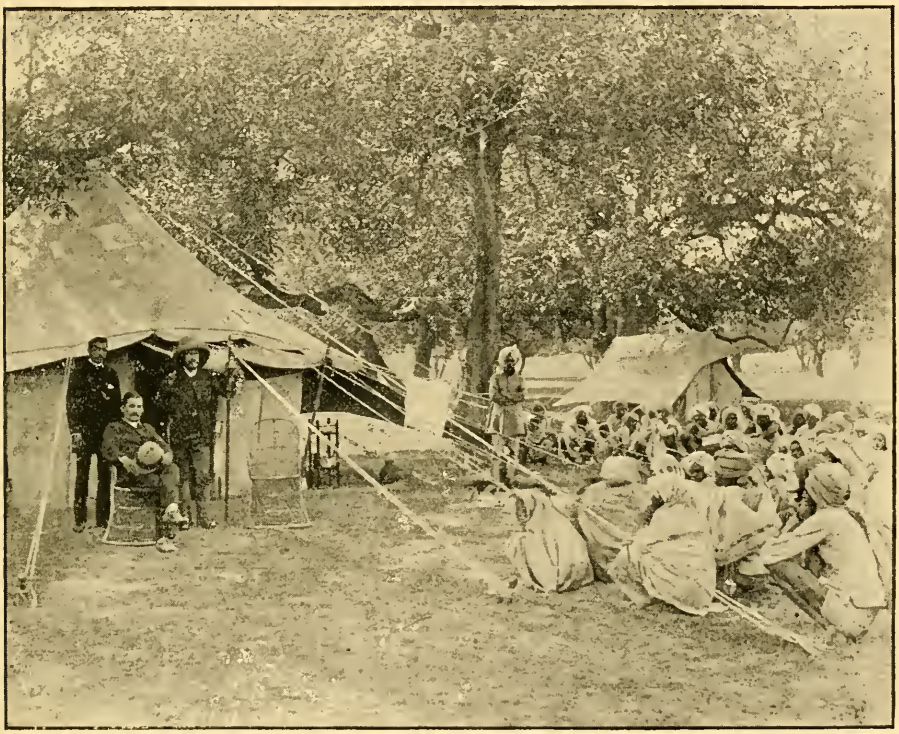
"While she lay there suffering, oh, so sadly! she heard that just outside the village, under the mango trees, tents had been put up, and an Englishman—a doctor—had come to live there for some months, and to see if he could help and heal the sick folk who lived in that district. Soon he heard of the poor suffering woman, and he and his assistant visited her day after day, and themselves dressed the bad sores, treated the disease, and did all they could to help her.

"The village people could not understand it at all. The doctor got no money for his services, and yet he came every day for a month and a half, while he stayed in the neighbourhood. They did not know that this doctor had left his own land and had come out there, not only to heal the bodies of the people, but because he loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and wanted them all to love Him too, and so he was trying to follow in his Master's steps, and to heal and teach all with whom he came into contact.

"The poor woman recovered her health and strength. She had three sons, but the eldest was no help to her; he was a gambler, and a good-for-nothing fellow. The other two were bright village lads, and got quite friendly with the English doctor, for they generally trotted back with him to his tent, after the daily visit, to fetch the medicine for their mother.

"But the hot weather came all too soon, and as there was no house near in which the doctor could stay, he had to go away to another place until the cooler days came again.

"But as soon as possible he returned, and on inquiring for this family he was told a very sad story. The mother had become ill again, and had died during the hot weather, and the second boy,



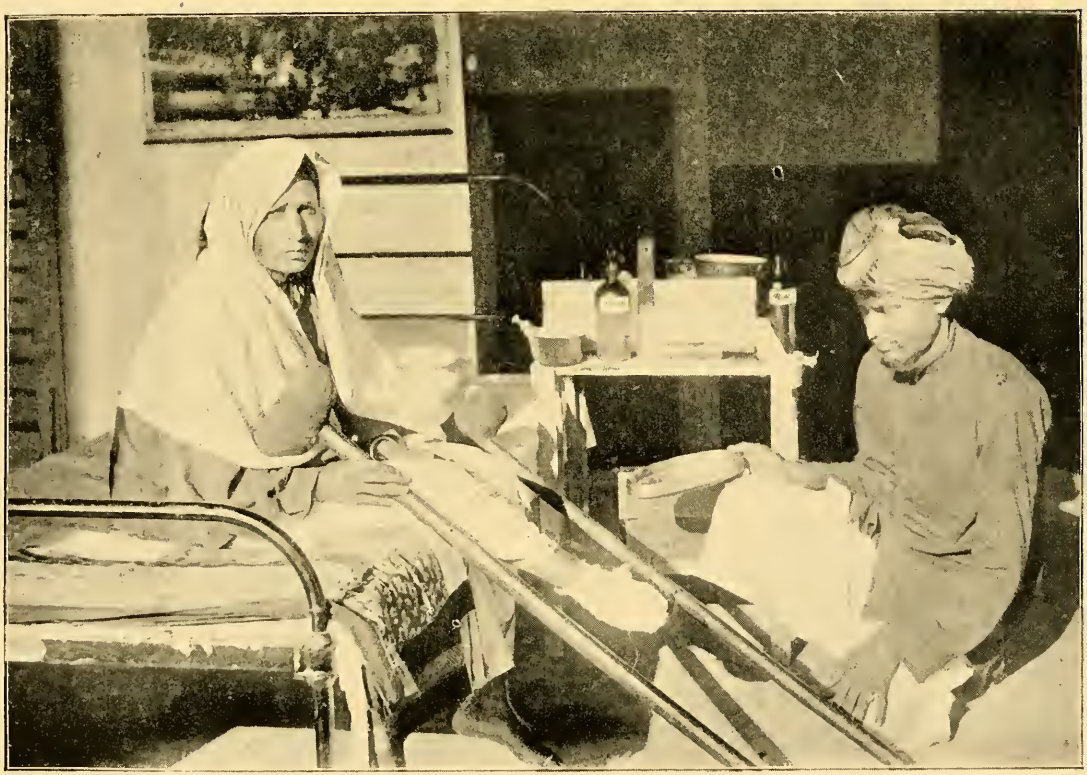
A MEDICAL MISSIONARY'S CAMP.

young Shiv, had become totally blind. It appeared that he got work with a grain merchant, and used to drive a bullock-cart about from village to village and collect grain, or the money that was due to the merchant. But one day both his eyes became

inflamed. Various remedies were recommended to him by the villagers, and these he used, but his eyes got worse and worse. At last he decided to go to Benares and see a doctor. He walked the whole way,—some twenty miles,—only to be told that nothing could be done for him; he was hopelessly blind. He returned home to a life of darkness and misery. The elder brother, the gambler, beat him; the younger brother was not old enough to earn much, and the poor blind boy could do nothing to support himself and his little wife.

"As the good doctor walked through the village he found the lad seated disconsolately outside a hut, with a hopeless look on his face. He examined his eyes, and found that the verdict of the Benares doctor was only too true. But he could not bear to leave the lad in his helplessness, so it was arranged that he should come up to the tent every afternoon, when medical work was over. His little brother led him by the hand, and under a tree the two friends sat together, he on the ground and the doctor on a stool. Then the doctor told him simple Bible stories in the Hindi language, and the lad repeated them in his broad village dialect. What he said the doctor wrote down carefully, word for word, in his note-book, for he wanted to learn well the language of these village folks, so that he might understand them thoroughly, and be the better able to help them. For this service he was able to pay the lad something, and so make him feel again that he was of some use in the world, though he was blind.

"Some time passed away, and then, after enduring many disappointments, a house was found for the doctor and his family, and they came to live and work in the midst of these village people. They had a hospital too, where the poor sick folk could be taken



IN A MISSIONARY HOSPITAL.

in and treated and helped in a way that was impossible in their own tiny homes.

"You may be quite sure the doctor did not forget the poor blind boy. In the hot days he had him for a 'punkah coolie.' This was easy work, and work a blind boy could do as well as any, for it only meant sitting on a verandah for some hours, and pulling a rope which was fastened to a big fan, which moved backwards and forwards in a room, and tempered the heat just a little. He taught him a 'bhajan,'—a Christian hymn to a native tune,—and the lad would sit and sing it after a fashion of his own, sometimes, when he thought the doctor was out of hearing, putting the name of his god, 'Ram,' wherever there came in the hymn the name of Christ.

"He has learnt now to go about by himself up and down the lanes of the village, and even along the little paths between the rice fields; he carries a big stick, and *tap*, *taps* with this the ground before him as he goes.

"In the cool weather, when punkahs were no longer needed, the doctor taught him to read a little Hindi primer for the blind, printed in the 'Braille' type.

"He is still a Hindoo,—a Brahmin,—and thinks caste must not be broken; but he is a simple sort of fellow, and honest in his beliefs. He thinks Christ is the god for the English, and Ram and all the others the gods for the Hindoos.

"Let us all pray that soon, very soon, he may learn to know Christ as his Saviour, and then, though his outward eyes will still be dark, he will have the true Light in his life and in his heart."

CHAPTER IX

A MISSIONARY SALE

SATURDAY soon came round again. Miss Grey had had a very busy week, but she got home on Friday evening, and was ready to welcome the children as usual on Saturday afternoon.

After they had been chatting for some time, she said: "I think you will all like to hear of one place I have been visiting this week, and what the children there are doing for the missionary work. I went to speak at two meetings at a place called Barnet, and my hostess was a lady with several children. There were two boys, Jack and Roy, about eleven and twelve; and two girls, Kathleen about thirteen, and little Mary just six. I had not been long in the house before I discovered that they were all very busy about something, and before long I was let into the secret. They and some schoolfellows had been working very hard all the winter; the boys had done some capital fretwork and a kind of wood-carving, whilst Kathleen and her friends had dressed some dolls and made some little pinafores; and even little Mary had pasted some pictures neatly into a scrap-book. I was shown the things, and admired them, and then I asked what they were going to do with them.

"'Oh,' said Kathleen, 'they are all for our Missionary "Sale of Work." We have had it for two years now, and this will be the third. We work hard all the winter, and then in April we have a

Sale in the dining-room, and we invite our friends. As you were coming to stay with us, mother said we might have it while you were here, so it is to be to-morrow.'

"Of course I promised to do all I could to help, and then asked them what they did with the money, and how much they expected to get?

"Jack said: 'The first year we got two pounds, last year three pounds, and this year we are hoping to get more, because we are older and can make nicer things. The first year we sent it all to the Missionary Society, but last year we thought we should like to have somebody to specially work for, so we sent it through the Missionary Society to support a cot for a poor sick child in the hospital at Jiaganj. We are going to send it again this year; but if we get more than three pounds, the rest is to go to the general missionary work, for mother does not want us to forget that there are people all over the world who have not yet heard of Jesus Christ.'

"As I know the hospital very well where they are sending their money, I was able to tell them, to their great delight, of a little girl who was treated there. Perhaps she was one whom their gift had helped."

Here Marjorie broke in: "Tell us about the little girl too, please, auntie."

"It is not a very long story," said Miss Grey, "but you shall hear it. Among our Indian servants was one who always did all the sweeping. You know, Indian servants will only do their own particular work, not all kinds of work, as ours do in England. This sweeper woman had a little girl about six years old, who often came with her mother in the morning, and played about until the work was done. She was very fond of going down to the stables, and in

the cold weather mornings she would sit down by the men who fetched the grass for the horses, and warm her hands over their fire. But one morning, when I was in the dining-room, I heard fearful shrieks, and, going to the door, saw this little girl rushing up the garden path all on fire. We caught her, and put out the fire, but not before the child was badly burnt. As it was cold weather,

PATIENTS IN THE VICTORIA HOSPITAL, BENARES.
(*Lent by the "Zenana, Bible, and Medical Mission."*)

beside her little *sari*, she had on a vest, and this had caught fire, and, being tight, had burnt her a good deal before it could be got off. She was taken to the hospital, and for a long time had to lie still and suffer a great deal of pain. But eventually she got quite well again, I am glad to say. In the hospital she had loving care and attention, such as would have been impossible in her own home, for that was

only a little hut with one room. Best of all, while she was there in the hospital she heard of Jesus."

The children thanked Miss Grey, and then Phyllis asked how the "Sale" went off.

"Splendidly," was Miss Grey's answer. "It was a beautiful afternoon, and, as I had some *saris* with me, I dressed Kathleen and Mary up like Bengali ladies, and Jack and Roy like Bengali boys. A good many friends came, and they sold nearly everything, so that when they added up the money they found it came to just over four pounds. You can imagine how pleased they were. They tell me they are going to work harder than ever next winter."

Miss Grey had hardly finished when the clock struck five, and Mrs. Merton came in to ask if they were ready for tea. Work was soon put away, and, as usual, the table was pulled near to Marjorie's sofa.

After all had finished tea, work was brought out again, and Miss Grey told them a story, quite a different one from the others they had heard, for this was about a little Burmese girl.

CHAPTER X

A LITTLE PRINCESS

"TO-DAY I want to tell you about a little Burmese girl, a little princess, whom we got to know a year or two ago.

"Many of the manners and customs of these Burmese people are very different from those of the Hindoos. I think you will like to hear of one or two of them.

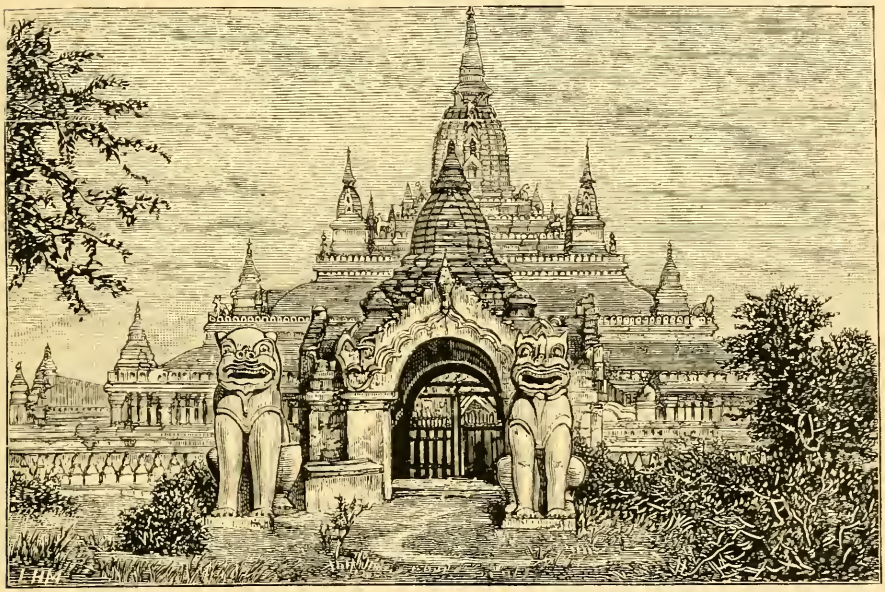
"If a tiny baby cries, they say it is because the fairy children are teasing it and saying, 'Your mother is dead'; and when the babies hear that they begin to laugh, and answer back, 'No; I have just been nursed by her.' But if the fairy children tease and say, 'Your father is dead,' the baby goes on crying, for it does not know much about its father, and thinks it may be true.

"When the baby is a fortnight old, friends are invited to the house. The baby's head is washed in a decoction made from the pods of the acacia tree, and all the visitors wash their hands in this too. These friends bring presents, and offerings of flowers and fruit are given to one of the spirits. This is generally the time for giving the baby its name, and little girls often have very funny names given to them, such as Miss Naughty, Miss Dog, and Miss Frog's Egg. The Burmese mothers do not kiss their babies; they smell or sniff them, we are told.

"They have a very funny way of describing the time. Seven

o'clock in the evening is 'Children-feel-sleepy time'; ten o'clock at night is 'Grown-up-people-lay-down-their-heads time'; and if they want to say that something would take a quarter of an hour to do, they say, 'The boiling of a pot of rice.'

"The people are what are called Buddhists. They worship a



A BURMESE TEMPLE.

great idol called Buddha, and build grand temples in his honour; but they also are very much afraid of evil spirits, and are constantly making offerings in order to prevent their doing them any injury.

"The women are not shut up as the Hindoo women are. Their dress is very picturesque. It consists of a loose white linen jacket,

or, if the woman be rich, of a brocaded jacket, with rather large bell-shaped sleeves. Then there is a long piece of silk or cotton cloth, about one and a half yards long, and rather less in width, made in two pieces of different patterns. The lower piece forms the border, and this is made into a very tight skirt. Over their shoulders they put a coloured shawl or a fine piece of embroidered crêpe. Their hair is black, and generally long and silky. They wear it coiled round and round on the crown of the head, and on one side they arrange with much taste a bunch of flowers.

"But I must tell you about our little friend—the little princess. Her father was a brother of the last king of Burmah, and after the last war he was sent away out of the country to India, and given a house to live in, about a mile and a half from my Indian home. It was a big house, and there were large grounds round it; and we found that a large number of men, women, and children were living there.

"We wanted very much to visit them and tell them of Jesus, but the prince would never allow us to do so, though once, when his little daughter was ill, he did send for the missionary lady doctor. She had rather a queer experience there. She was taken upstairs to the bedside of the sick girl, and, as she could speak no Burmese, a lad who could speak both Hindustani and Burmese was stationed just outside the door, and the prince himself stood at the bottom of the stairs.

"Every question she asked had to be translated into Burmese by the boy, and shouted to the prince downstairs, and to the invalid in the room. And it was just the same with the girl's answers; they had to be translated to the doctor and shouted to the father, who was waiting to hear. In spite of these difficulties, I think the doctor did

THE LITTLE PRINCESS.

something to help the girl; but as soon as she was a little better the door was shut, and no Christian teacher was allowed to go into the house.

"But not long afterwards the prince died, and was buried in a special burying ground near the house; and his son, a young man of eighteen or nineteen years of age, became head of the family. This

A BURMESE CEMETERY.

young man was more enlightened than his father, and was very anxious that his little sister (a child of eleven) should learn English. He sent to us, and asked if one of us would come and teach her. We agreed to go, making it quite clear that we go nowhere without telling of Jesus, who loves all and wants all to love Him.

"It was not very easy work teaching the little princess. She

was quiet and obedient, and ready to do her best, but she only knew the Burmese language, and we did not know a word of it. Still, by means of pictures and signs, we were able to teach her something; and then, after some months, the Government changed the house where these Burmese people were to live, and they came to live quite close to us.

"The little princess had a good many half-sisters, and these ladies thought they would like to come and see us. Several of them, dressed in their best, looking so picturesque, came to visit us, and we found out that one of them could speak a little Hindustani. So, by means of interpretation, we could talk with them. Then we found that at least one of them could read her own Burmese language, and one day when they came we gave her a gospel in Burmese. She was very pleased, and began to read it at once, and took it away with her. We have not seen very much of them since then, but we know now that they have part of God's Word in their home, and if they read it, it will teach them of Christ and His salvation. Let us all pray that they *may* read it, and learn to love Him."

All the children had got permission to attend the "Demonstration" the next week; so, before they left, auntie told them of the arrangements she had made, and they promised to meet her at one o'clock at the railway station. The "Demonstration" did not begin until half-past three, but the meeting was generally so crowded, that there was no chance of getting a good seat except by being there very early indeed.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHILDREN'S MISSIONARY DEMONSTRATION

MANY a time during that week did Marjorie wish she were well enough to go with her friends on Saturday, but she tried to keep bright and happy. Friday afternoon Rex had to go up to London, and he brought back with him a charming new missionary book for his little sister. It was called *The Great Big World*, or *A Missionary Walk at the Zoo*. It was beautifully got up and illustrated; so with that Marjorie was able to look forward to a happy afternoon of reading, while the others went to the "Demonstration" in Exeter Hall.

Saturday was a lovely day, and all the children were at the station in good time. Mr. Merton had secured a reserved carriage for them, so they travelled very comfortably up to London. Arriving there, they had a long ride on the top of an omnibus to Exeter Hall. All of them enjoyed this, but especially Lewis and Bernard, who had not often been to London, and who were full of questions about everything they saw. The doors were just opened when they reached Exeter Hall, and they went right in, and got good seats. There was a long time to wait, but plenty to interest them.

After a time, auntie left them, and went away to turn herself into an Indian lady. For, at that meeting, all the missionaries who are

at home, and who possibly can, dress themselves in the costume of the people among whom they have been living and working.

Punctually at half-past three they all came into the hall; and now there was plenty for the children to look at. Ladies from different parts of India, some in white and some in brightly-coloured *saris*, ladies from China, with their hair done in Chinese fashion, and gorgeous robes of many coloured silks; a priest from Mongolia, with his yellow robe, great yellowish woolly headdress, and his little bell; Madagascar ladies and gentlemen in their *lambas*; a South Sea Island gentleman in his robes made of grass, and many others from other parts of the world.

A hymn was sung, and then more strangers appeared—boys and girls who represented the boys and girls of other lands: young Hindoos and Mohammedans, Chinese children, South Sea Islanders, New Guinea boys, and Madagascar boys and girls. Some thirty-six of them marched in and stood along the front of the platform; and then those representing each country told some facts about the condition of the people in their lands, and the audience responded with a text of Scripture. That over, these strangers went to seats on the right and left reserved for them, and the chairman spoke in a way that thoroughly interested the great hall full of young people.

During the afternoon various missionaries from various countries recited texts, or sang hymns, in the languages in which they speak and teach when they are at work. Some of them sounded very funny indeed, and made the children laugh. There were two short speeches. One of them those who heard are never likely to forget. It was a story told by a lady missionary from India, about a little famine child and the work the good missionary doctors do in India. It was called "Mungeri, the little girl the jackals tried to eat."

THE CHILDREN'S MISSIONARY DEMONSTRATION IN EXETER HALL.

"One morning the village *chaukidar*, the native policeman, got up from his string-bed, stretched himself, put on his blue drill coat and red turban, and taking in his hand his sign of office (a bamboo staff with a brass head), sauntered out to go his morning round. He passed through the village, and out into the road beyond, with the rice fields on either side. But he had not gone far when he saw something lying in a corner of a field. It was the cold weather,—cold weather after one of the great Indian famines,—and he crossed the field, where the rice had been cut, to see what was lying there. And the sight that met his eyes was a very sad one, for there, all alone, lay a little girl about five years old. She was nearly naked, and looked half starved, and on her legs and body were wounds, as if she had been bitten by the jackals, who come out at night, and may attack anything that is weak and helpless.

"The policeman knew that the missionary doctor had come to live near the village, so it was soon arranged that the suffering little child should go to the mission hospital, and be under the doctor's care until she got well again.

"She was taken there, but she was such a frightened, dazed little thing, too scared to talk beyond just telling her name, and ready to do nothing but cry. For a long time she suffered very much, especially when the wounds were dressed day by day, for jackals as a rule eat filth and refuse only, and the wounds that were made by their teeth seemed to have been poisoned, and so they were a long, long time in healing.

"Her name was Mungeri, and she had a tremendous appetite, more like a little wolf-cub than a little girl. The helpers in the hospital were Christians, and they were very sorry for the poor little thing, and often gave her tit-bits from their own food, in addition to the

ordinary hospital diet; so, in spite of all the pain and suffering, it was not by any means the most miserable time in her little life that she spent at the hospital.

"But at last she was cured, and the question then arose what was to be done with her? No one had come forward to claim her, and it seemed probable that her parents had died, or deserted her in the famine time, and since then she had wandered about begging her

A MEDICAL MISSION DISPENSARY.

food, until she got ill, and lay down in the field where the jackals first, and then the policeman, had found her.

"Not many miles from the mission hospital, some lady missionaries were living, and knowing how many uncared-for orphan children there are in India, they had started an orphanage, a home where such little girls could be taken in, and loved, and trained to love and serve God and their brothers and sisters. So, finding no one claimed little Mungeri, the doctor arranged for her to go to this orphanage.

She had no warm clothes of her own, and the nights in that part of India are often cold, so the doctor's wife found some little garments belonging to one of her own children,—a little woollen vest and a print frock,—and dressed in these, an odd little figure indeed, but warm and comfortable, she was taken to her new home.

"It was quite a new life for her; she was well fed, warmly and comfortably clothed, and taught to read and write, and about the Lord Jesus and His love, and she had plenty of little sisters with whom she could play and chatter, and she grew bright and happy.

"But this did not last very long, for after a few months she became suddenly ill. The ladies had a doctor to see her, but he could not find out what was the matter, so they sent her to a great city not far away, where there are lady doctors, and a beautiful hospital for women and children. The nurses there are Christian women; some of them were once Hindoos, but they had heard of Jesus, and learned to love Him, and were spending their lives trying to nurse, and help, and comfort their poor sick sisters, and to lead them to the Saviour who loves them all.

"One of those nurses I knew very well, and I think *you* would like to hear something about her.

"Some eight years ago a girl of about seventeen years of age came to see us. She was a Hindoo, and on her face there were certain marks showing to what religion she belonged; but somewhere she had seen a picture,—a picture of some one hanging on a cross. This had interested her, and she wanted to know what it meant, and who it was that hung there. She inquired of the folks round her home, and they told her that if she went to the Christians they would tell her. So she came to us, and seeing she was in earnest, we took her into our home, and began to teach her. She wanted to learn, but oh!

she was so dull, so ignorant, and so stupid, it seemed as if she never would learn. What she was taught one day was all forgotten by the next, and sometimes we were almost tempted to think that she would never know anything. But bit by bit, and step by step, she did learn, and as we watched her day by day we could see that in

BENGALI CHRISTIAN NURSE AND PATIENT.

her daily life she was trying to follow Christ; and then, when she had been with us more than two years, she came one day, and told us she wanted to learn to be a nurse, and in that way to comfort and help her Indian sisters.

"We made inquiries, and found that the only hospital to which she could go for training was the one where little Mungeri was taken. But from our home it was a long journey of some twenty-one hours,

and besides, it was in quite a different province, where the people spoke another language, and ate quite different food.

"However, the girl went there, and though learning the new language was hard work for one who only two years before had been so ignorant, and though it was not always easy work to eat the different kind of food, she struggled on, and if sometimes disheartened and depressed, she never gave up, but did her best to learn all that would fit her to be a really efficient and capable nurse. In her last examination the examiner was the doctor who had taken in little Mungeri after the jackals had bitten her, and he was so pleased with her answers and her nursing work, that he was able to give her a first-class certificate.

"In nursing she has found her life work, and is rejoicing to-day in being able to care for the poor sick bodies of the women and little children, rejoicing too in the opportunities this work gives her of telling of Jesus, who can heal the sick both in mind and body.

"Little Mungeri stayed some time in the hospital, tended and surrounded by loving care, but nothing seemed to do her any good. Day by day she grew weaker and weaker, until at last the Saviour called her, and she went to join the band of little children who have left this earth, and gone to live with Him for ever.

"Are you not glad little Mungeri was found that cold-weather morning, and helped, and her sufferings lessened by the good missionary doctors?

"This year again we hear that there is a great famine in India, and many little girls will be left orphans and desolate. Let us not forget to pray that many, many of them may meet with kind friends who will feed and comfort them, and teach them of Jesus, who loves all the children the wide world over."

CHAPTER XII

A TALK ABOUT FLOWERS

BEFORE returning home, auntie, Rex, and the children all had tea at Exeter Hall, and there they were joined by Marjorie's father, who had not been able to get to the meeting, but who came to help to take the party safely home. There was again the omnibus ride, and the time in the train, and all arrived safely at the station by seven o'clock, very tired, but very happy, and with plenty to talk about, and to tell to the friends who had stayed at home.

Marjorie had had a happy afternoon, for her mother had brought her work and had listened while she read aloud from her new book; but she was very glad to see the travellers back, and to hear all about the meeting. Rex had remembered the story of the little famine girl, and told it to her before she went to bed.

Soon after the Children's Demonstration it was time for Rex to return to school, and he went, leaving all at home missing him very much.

The doctor had said that, as the weather grew warmer, Marjorie was to be out of doors as much as possible; so all through June the Band Meetings were held in the garden. Though living so near London, Mr. Merton had a lovely garden, with a number of

fine old trees in it, and running through it there was a tiny stream. A hammock was slung for Marjorie between two trees, chairs and rugs were arranged near by, and the friends had some very happy times as they talked and worked and listened during those June Saturday afternoons.

Many were the questions which Miss Grey had to answer.

One afternoon Muriel said, "Do the people in India like flowers, Miss Grey?"

"Yes and no," was auntie's answer. "I mean by that, they do not pick them and arrange them about the house, or have vases on their tables, as we have; but the Christian women and girls are very fond of *wearing* flowers, and the Hindoos use them a good deal in their idol worship. But for this worship they as a rule only pick the heads of the flowers; it is just the petals that are offered to the gods.

"At one time in the year the ponds are covered with lotus flowers, which are something like great water-lilies, but of various colours—pale pink, mauve, and pure white. They are very lovely, and as we pass the temples we often see them arranged all round the idol; and as we walk along the river bank we see them floating down the river, for many who come to bathe in the sacred water bring a flower as an offering to the river goddess.

"Another flower which is much used in Hindoo worship is the Indian jessamine. It grows on tiny bushes, and blossoms very freely, and the little white heads are picked off—in fact, I believe some old women quite add to their means of living by cultivating and selling these blossoms. They are very sweet, and are often made into wreaths and worn by the people. The flowers are picked when in bud, and strung together as you might string daisies; then

as the evening comes on, they open and give out a strong delicious scent.

"But perhaps the flower most used is the marigold; it grows and flourishes well in India, and the people love it. I have seen men with strings of marigolds round their necks coming or going to the idol temple, and this flower is also used for decorations. At Christmas time the Christians love to decorate their houses and the churches, and the marigold is much to the front, and looks very pretty, peeping out among the dark green leaves which they twine into arches and wreaths.

"Flowers are a very important part of idol worship. When I was in Benares some years ago, I saw many people going about with little brass baskets. In the middle of these baskets was a brass jar, containing holy Ganges water, and a spoon to ladle it out. Round the jar there were placed the petals and heads of many bright-coloured flowers, and in two little pockets at the side there was rice, and also some red powder. The idols seem to be everywhere in Benares; you cannot go more than a few yards without seeing one; so these people walk round with their baskets, and leave a few flowers, a few grains of rice, a little vermillion, and a few drops of holy water, at each shrine.

"Do you ever get any English flowers, Miss Grey?" This was Nora's question, for she was very fond of gardening, and Botany was quite her favourite lesson at school.

"Yes," said Miss Grey; "in the cold weather almost any English summer flowers will grow; but they need a good deal of care and looking after, and I have never been very successful, for I never have had the time to care for them properly. Roses grow beautifully, and, besides the English people, many of the rich native

gentlemen are beginning to cultivate, and take an interest in, these lovely flowers. But their chief idea seems to be to get their roses as *big* as possible. I have seen some as big as a cheese plate, and

MARJORIE SITTING UP.

they do not at all like to pick them when in bud; they always wait until the flower is fully developed."

Marjorie was lying in her hammock, and, looking up at the

beautiful trees under whose shade she was lying, she said, "What kind of trees have you out there, auntie?"

"Quite as fine as yours here, Marjorie," was auntie's answer; "but many of them are very different from the English trees. There are a good many kinds of acacias, and they have lovely flowers. One kind has a great scarlet flower, and looks grand when fully out; and another is covered with pale-pink feathery flowers, looking something like little brushes. There is one tree, very pretty to look at, but very unpleasant when out in flower, because of its smell. You know the smell of a mouse, or of an unused room where mice have been. It is just like that, and I often wish that we could cut down some of these trees which grow quite near our house.

"You have all heard of the banyan tree with its queer branches, which grow down into the ground and form new roots. It is a very sacred tree, and no Hindoo would dream of cutting it down. One tree, quite a near relation of the banyan, is especially sacred. One of the gods is said to live in the roots, another in the trunk, and the goblins and spirits attending on a third are said to have their home among the leaves. This makes some of the people afraid to go too near the tree at night.

"Then out in India we have the beautiful palm trees—the cocoa-nut, the date, and the palmyra palms. Some of the ponds are most lovely, for they are fringed with these palms, and they are so beautiful with their long straight stems and crowns of feathery leaves at the top.

"Except in the cool weather, we cannot enjoy sitting out of doors in India—at least, not in the plains—as we are doing now. But after tea I will tell you about a delightful holiday that we once had up among the mountains."

What fun that having tea out in the garden was!

Mrs. Merton knew how little folks like sitting on the ground, so they all sat on the rugs and had a real picnic-tea. They enjoyed it all the more too because Marjorie was able to sit up and have it with them.

After tea came the promised story.

GWEN.

CHAPTER XIII

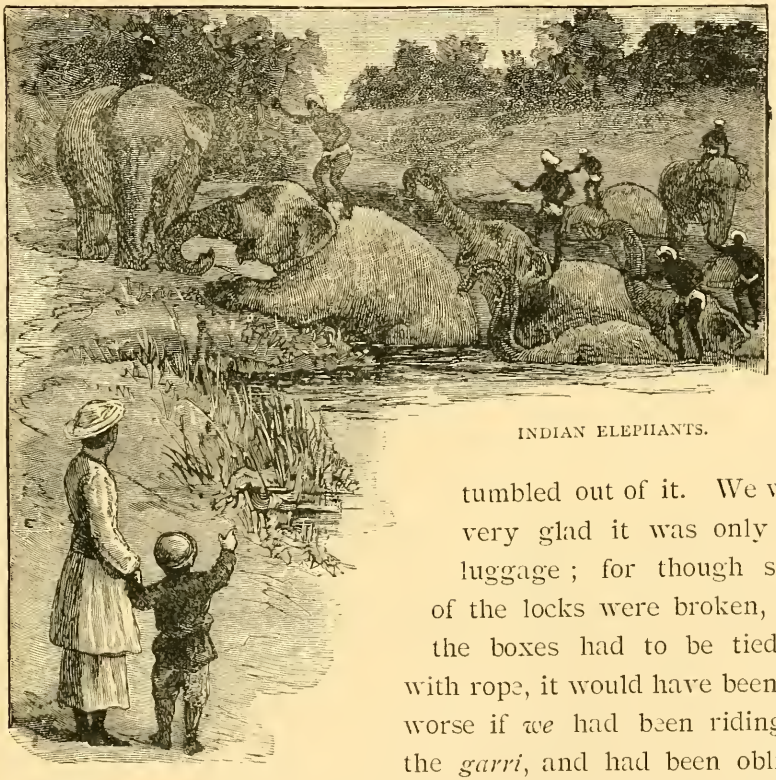
A HOLIDAY AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

"IT was getting hotter every day, and for some weeks we had to stay in the house in the day-time, and to have our schools, and to visit our zenanas, either in the very early mornings or after five o'clock in the evenings. By-and-by it became really too hot even for that—too hot to do any work at all; hotter than ever you knew it in the hottest summer time. So we decided to give the women and the little girls a holiday, and to get away ourselves for a few weeks up into a cooler region, where we might renew our health and strength, and get ourselves fitted for further work among the women and children.

"It *was* hot work packing up our things, and the warm clothes which we had to put into the boxes felt so hot that we were quite glad to put them away out of sight.

"We were fifteen miles from a railway station; so there was a long drive for us as the first part of our journey. It was too long for the little country ponies to drag both us and our luggage, so we got the boxes ready and sent them off first in a *garri* during the afternoon. The *garri* is a kind of large box fitted on four wheels. It will hold four people, and these sit opposite each other as in a cab. It is usually drawn by two little country ponies—*tats* they are called.

But this *garri* I am telling you about met with an adventure by the way. It had to pass a great elephant, and the ponies got so frightened that they overturned the *garri*, and all our luggage was



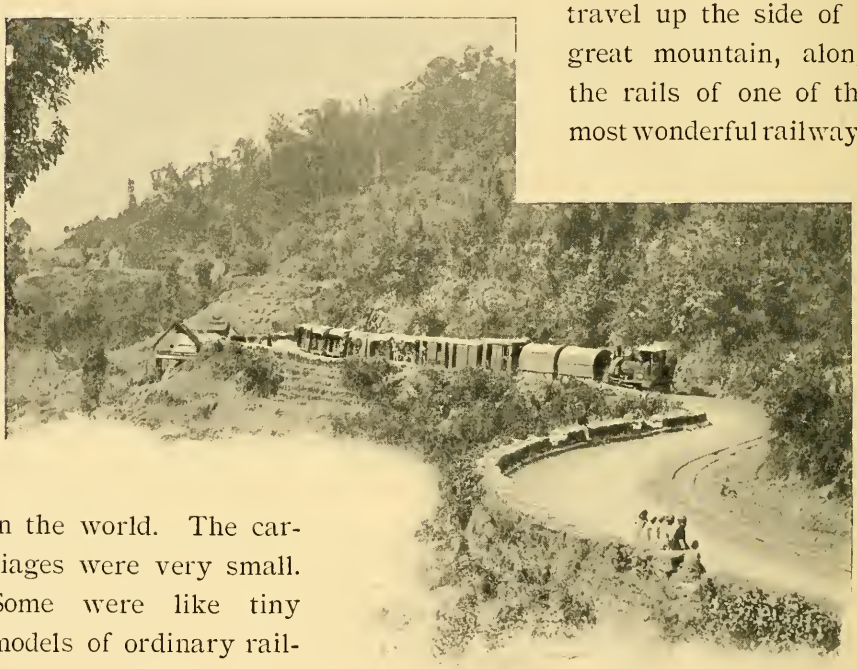
INDIAN ELEPHANTS.

tumbled out of it. We were very glad it was only the luggage; for though some of the locks were broken, and the boxes had to be tied up with rope, it would have been far worse if *we* had been riding in the *garri*, and had been obliged to start on our holiday journey with bruised bodies and frightened minds.

"We had a very long journey before us, for we left the station at six o'clock on a Tuesday evening, and did not arrive at our destination until Saturday, at five o'clock. We had to travel in five

trains, and also to cross a great river in a steamer, before we could get even to the foot of the hills which we intended to visit.

"When we reached the hills we found a tiny train waiting for us, and in it we began to travel up the side of a great mountain, along the rails of one of the most wonderful railways in the world. The carriages were very small. Some were like tiny models of ordinary railway carriages, and others were like tramway cars, with no sides, but having a roof at the top. The engine too was small, but very powerful, and there was a seat in front of it on which two men always sat, whose duty it was to watch the line and see that the way was clear.



THE HILL-TRAIN.

"We chose the open carriages, partly because they were cheaper,

and partly because from them we could get a better view of the country round. It was all so fresh to us, and all the way up there were glorious pictures of mountains and valleys and streams for us to see. First the country was rather flat, and we passed through a great forest, with just here and there a clearing, in which tea-plants

HILL-BOYS.

were growing. We saw the houses of the tea-planters, which were often built on wooden piles, so as to be as high up as possible,—they reminded us of boys walking about on stilts,—for this land, which has been reclaimed from the forest, is often very unhealthy, and the only way for English folk to keep well at all is to live up as far above the ground as they possibly can. In some of these gardens we saw the

women and the children picking off the tea-leaves. They looked very picturesque as they walked about among the green bushes.

"Some of the women, besides the basket which was to hold the leaves, had another long thin basket hanging round their necks, and in it what do you think there was? There was a baby fast asleep, and quite safe and happy in its swinging cradle, while the mother's arms were free to do her daily work.

"Soon we began to ascend the hill. Sometimes we seemed to pass close to the edge of a precipice; sometimes a mountain stream seemed as if it were rushing right down upon us; sometimes we passed by a village, and at the doors of the queer wooden huts we could see the little hill boys and girls; they seemed merry and happy, but as they crowded round the carriages whenever the train stopped, we could see that they were not so clean and tidy as the little ones we had left down in the plains.

"Here and there we caught a glimpse of the flat district we had left behind, and could see the great river, which looked like a tiny silver snake winding through the country as it glistened in the sun.

"Once, when we were about half-way up, some one said, 'Look out to the left,' and there we caught our first glimpse of the everlasting hills covered with the eternal snow. That is a sight which, once seen, no one can forget. Too often, alas! the rain mists hang low over the grand mountains, and though we know that the lovely snow-clad hills are there, we cannot get a sight of them.

"We arrived at Darjeeling, which was the end of our railway journey, about two o'clock on a Thursday; and we hoped that we should find *dandies* waiting to take us on at once, because we had previously arranged to sleep that night at a rest-house situated some eight miles farther on.

"A *dandy* is a kind of chair in which people who are not clever at riding on horseback can travel over the hills. If the person is thin and light, he or she is carried by three men; but if the passenger is big and stout and heavy, it is necessary to have four men.

HILL-CHILDREN WATCHING THE TRAIN.

"We were a party of six, but when we got outside the station there were only four *dandies* to be had, though six had been ordered the day before. As the time was getting on, four of the party got into

the four *dandies*, and off they started. I, and a friend with me, decided to stay behind, and try to get two more *dandies*. After rather a weary half-hour or more of waiting and inquiring, we

A NEPAULESE WOMAN.

managed to get a pony and *one* dandy, and, one of us on the pony and the other in the dandy, started on our eight miles journey.

"For a time we kept well together, and enjoyed greatly the cool air and the lovely views which opened up to us on every side and with every turn of the path. But the road lay mostly downhill, for

A DARJEELING DANDY.

though the place to which we were going was right up among the mountains, in order to get to it we had to go down about 5,000 feet and then up another 3,000 feet and more.

"Too soon it began to get dark. We had been very late in starting. And then the rain came on, and we were still some miles distant from the rest-house. I was in the dandy, and I must confess it was not very pleasant or comfortable, for the roads became slippery, and once one of the bearers fell right down, and of course brought me down too. Fortunately, I was not hurt, but we were very glad when we arrived at the bungalow, or rest-house.

"It was a little house, built on purpose for the use of travellers. It was rather barely furnished, but our four companions, who had got there first, had made a good fire and had tea ready for us; so we soon felt better, and after drying our wet clothes and rugs, went to bed at once, because we planned to commence our journey again very early the next morning.

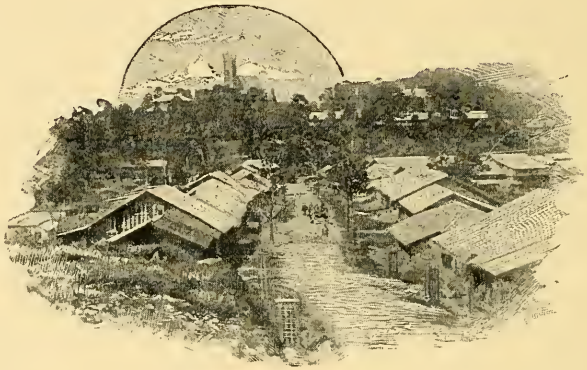
"We had heard a great deal about the beauty of the forest road which we were to travel the next day. It was a road with a grand sparkling river rushing fresh from the glaciers on the one side, and on the other side a great forest, which stretched for eight miles along the valley to a bridge, which we had to cross before beginning our hill climb again.

"But, alas! the morning dawned grey and dull, and before we had gone three miles on our way, the rain came down in sheets, and when we reached the bridge, and the rest-house which has been built beside it, we were all wet through.

"Some hot tea soon revived us, and then, very fortunately, the sun came out, and sunshine dried our wet things better and quicker than any fire could do. The sun was good enough to keep shining

as we climbed our last hill, and at length arrived, tired enough, but none the worse for our long and wet journey, at our destination, where we found kindly and loving welcome.

"Kalimpong is the name of the place to which we had come for our holiday. It is not very far from Thibet, and besides the people of several races who ordinarily live there, there are a great many Thibetans who come there to trade.



VIEW OF KALIMPONG.

"A great many of the people are Buddhists, and they have some queer customs in connection with prayer. Sometimes they write a special prayer over and over again on blue, white, red, or yellow cotton material, and then put these pieces, as flags, on the top of high poles. Many of the houses have these prayer-flags all round them. Others of the people think that it is better to put them altogether on the highest hill in the neighbourhood; for they suppose that, as the flag waves in the wind, their prayers that are written on the flags get heard and answered.

BRIDGE ACROSS THE TEESTA, NEAR DARJEELING.

"Another of their customs is to write this same prayer on a strip of paper over and over again, and to put this paper into a box which will turn round and round when worked with a handle. They hold this handle in the hand, and each of the revolutions is considered to be a prayer. So they can pray and do their ordinary business at the same time.

A BUDDHIST LAMA.

"They believe in evil spirits. One day, while we were staying there, a man died, and his relations thought the evil spirit which had afflicted him was still in the house, so they called together many of their priests (*lama* is the name by which they are known). These *lamas* made a tremendous noise, dug a three-cornered hole

in the garden, and pretended to drive the spirit into it. Then they buried it, and put three large stones on the top, in order to keep it safe within. These *lamas* are thought a great deal of, and they have a great deal of power over the people.

"I remember going to see a rich man who lived near where we were staying. The house in which he lived was made of wood, the family lived upstairs, and underneath the pigs and other animals had their home. We were taken up a dark staircase to a room at the top; it was rather dark and not very clean, but all along one side was a shrine with images and vessels arranged on it, and near a little window a *lama* was sitting with a big book in front of him, out of which he read continuously. The head of the house, by this arrangement, could go about his ordinary business, and yet feel he was praying all the time, as he employed the *lama* to do it for him.

"Some of the things we heard about these people were very pitiful. A little girl died in the forest when she was travelling with her father and mother from one village to another a good way off. She was buried there, but when the father got home he could not rest. He was a servant in an English family, and one day he came to his mistress and said, "The spirit of my little girl is still wandering about in the forest. If the *lama* comes to my house and plays music, she will hear, and in it he will tell her the way to god, and then she will be at rest."

"We visited the Scotch missionaries, who have been very successful in their work among these hill people. They have a splendid stone church on a hill, where it can be seen for many miles round. On Sundays we went there to service, and though we could not understand very much of what was said, we enjoyed

being there, for it was full of people—people, most of them, who were once worshippers of idols and evil spirits, but who now meet

A BUDDHIST SHRINE.

week by week in God's house to worship Him, and are trying day by day to live so as to please Him. Very many of them were very poor, and evidently had no Sunday clothes to come to

service in; but when collection time came round every one seemed to have his or her little gift to put into the plate.

"We visited the Hospital, the Boys' School, and the Girls' School, and one or two of the village chapels, and spent one afternoon with one of the missionaries, who is working more especially among the Thibetans. He is trying to start a school for the children, and to help and teach the men, who often stay for some weeks in Kalimpong when they come to trade.

"He told us some interesting stories. One of them I have never forgotten, and I think you will be interested in it too; so I will tell it you.

"Four young men were studying together at a Government school. Three of them became Christians, but the fourth left the place, and asked them not to write to him, because he said he never wished to be a Christian. This fourth was a native of Thibet. He did not stay at the place to which he went very long; but while he was there his wife was taught by a lady missionary, and became secretly a Christian, and then he moved still further away from his old friends.

"One night he had a dream. A figure came to him, and said 'You will have to go and preach the Gospel as Macdonald does.' (Macdonald was one of the friends with whom he went to school.) This dream impressed him very much, and when the post came in there was a letter from Macdonald, saying he could not keep from writing, and asking him to give up all and be a Christian. This letter, his dream, and his wife's influence, made him decide there and then for Christ, and as there were no missionaries in the place he went to the chaplain and asked to be baptized. The chaplain

sent a teacher to teach him a little more, and in a short time both husband and wife were baptized. Now he has moved from that place, and is living with a missionary. His wife is doing the cooking and he is working in the house, and at times (as often as ever he can) going out with the missionary to preach, and to tell to others the good news which means so much to him.

CHURCH AT KALIMPONG.

"Perhaps you know that, at the present time, no Christian missionary is allowed to go into Thibet, and so the only way to teach these people is to get at those who come away out of their own country for the purposes of trade. I want you to pray that many of them may learn to love and serve Jesus Christ, and then go back to their own country and teach what they themselves have learned to their poor, dark Thibetan friends and relations."

When she had finished the story, Miss Grey said, "I think next week we will have a different kind of meeting; you shall all dress up as Indian people, and we will invite your mothers, and a few other friends, and I will explain some things about the life and customs of the people. But as Mr. Merton and some of your fathers might like to be present, we will have the dressing-up from half-past five to half-past six, and I will tell you a story first, so that, after an early tea, we can be dressed and get quite ready by the time our visitors come.

All the children had seen the Indian clothes and jewels which auntie had brought with her, and they were longing to be dressed up in them, so they were very delighted with this proposal.

LEWIS.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STORY OF THE EARTHQUAKE

THE next week was a busy one. Mrs. Merton sent invitations to several other friends beside the parents of the members of the Band, and Miss Grey borrowed from the Mission House some cooking utensils, and various other Indian things, that would help to make her pictures more real.

The weather was beautifully warm and settled, and there was every prospect of a fine day on the Saturday.

To make it look as much like an Indian zenana as possible, Miss Grey rigged up a kind of little room in the garden. Some forms were borrowed from the Sunday School, and round these big clothes-horses were put, and covered with white sheets to represent the whitewashed walls.

Miss Grey had planned to have four pictures:—

1. A school-boy learning his lessons with his mother in the zenana.

2. Hindoo women getting a meal ready.

3. A grandmother giving a little girl her first lesson in idol-making and worship.

4. A zenana teacher and her pupils.

Very little decoration of the walls was needed, but Miss Grey pinned up a few of the pictures of the Hindoo gods, and put an

image of the elephant-headed god of Wisdom on a little shelf in one corner. No furniture was needed but a box or two, and a mat with a pillow and sheet placed in one corner.

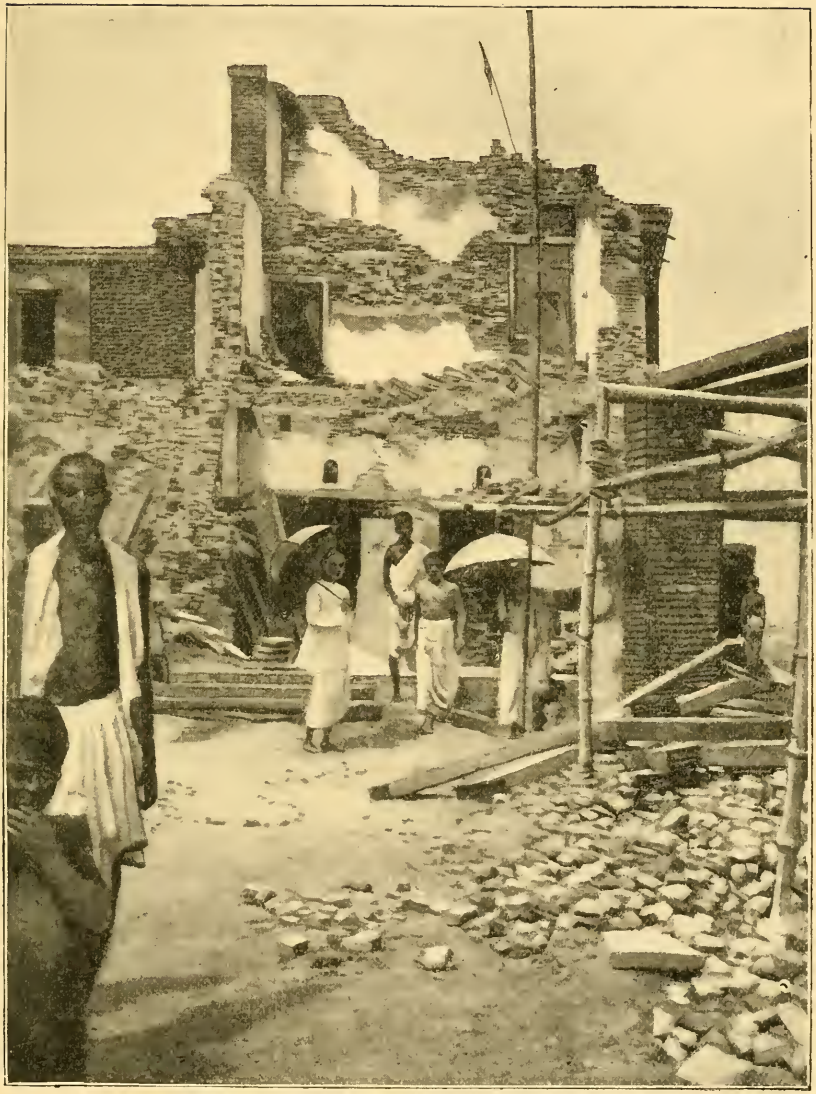
Marjorie lay in her hammock all Saturday morning and watched the preparations. When the rest of the things were ready, auntie brought out all her bright *saris*, and a quantity of bright imitation jewellery.

You may be quite sure that all the members of the "Band" arrived in good time, and for an hour they worked and rested, while auntie told them the story of the great earthquake which she had experienced.

"I told you last time of the happy holiday that we once had up among the mountains. To-day I am going to tell you of the way in which our holiday ended, and of a dreadful earthquake, which came suddenly, and did terrible damage in many parts of the country.

"Saturday, June 12th, was a bright, pleasant, sunny day; and as we had planned to leave Kalimpong on the coming Monday, we spent most of the morning packing our boxes and preparing for our return home. Then, after tea, which we had about four o'clock out in the garden, we started for a last long country walk.

"Very soon we had left all the houses behind us, but we had not gone very far away when there came a strange silence over everything: the birds stopped singing, and then, all of a sudden, the whole earth seemed as if it were moving, and the rocks and the trees near where we were standing seemed to move too, and we thought they were going to fall down upon us. We too felt as if we were falling, and went quite giddy, as if we were taken



A NATIVE STREET AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

ill. This lasted some three minutes, and when it was over we looked at each other, and said,—'That was an earthquake.' We did not, however, at once go back, but, feeling better, we continued our walk, and presently sat down for a little while to enjoy the lovely scenery and chat about many things.

"At last it was time to start homeward, and while we were still a good way off from Kalimpong, we met some men, who told us that the house in which we had been staying had become a ruin. Hardly believing the men, we hurried on, only to find that their report was quite true. Almost all the upper storey of the house was destroyed, and amid the dust and the ruins the people were packing up everything they could find to take away to another house. It was impossible for any of us to stay on there, so one of the Scotch missionaries, whose house had not been injured, invited us to stay with him until the Monday.

"I shall never forget the sight our bedrooms presented. There were great pieces of wall everywhere, on the floor and on the beds; and it was only with much difficulty that we managed to get about, and so to collect together our various possessions. There was not much sleep for any one that night, for slight shocks were constantly being felt, and every one feared there might be another severe one. Nothing more, however, happened, and so, early on the Monday morning, we started off on our return journey.

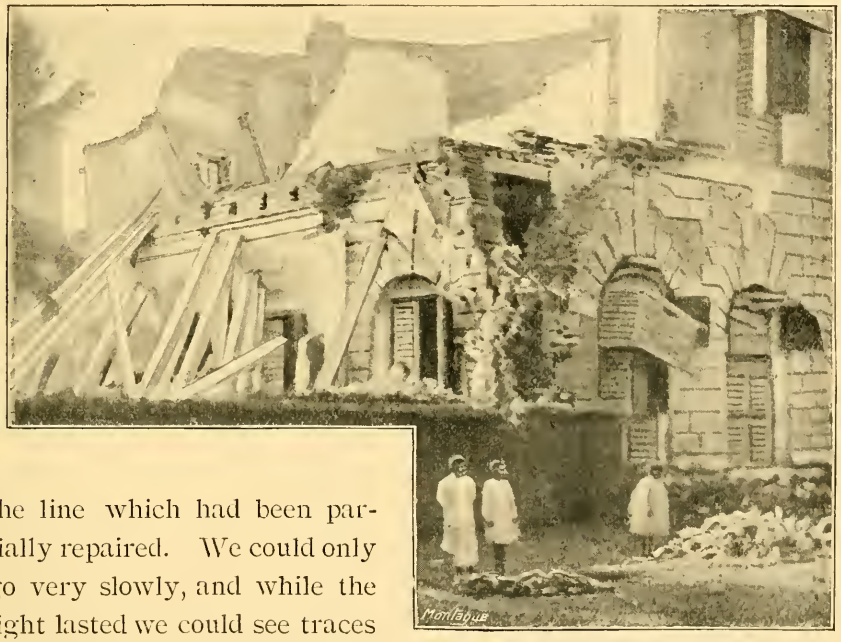
"We arrived at Darjeeling on the Tuesday, and had planned to stay there *one night;* but we were met by the news that they too had suffered from the earthquake very seriously, and besides, it had so greatly broken up the railway line at the foot of the hills for a distance of some thirty-seven miles, that travelling was impossible. There was no chance of any one being able to leave

Darjeeling, nor of any letters or newspapers coming up to it from other places. We could not even get to know what other places had been affected by the earthquake, and of course we feared what might have happened to our houses at Berhampur. Perhaps you can imagine how we felt, for we had left very many friends down there in Berhampur, whom we loved very much. As soon as we possibly could we sent them a telegram to ask how they had fared, and after some hours we got a telegram in answer, but it only said, '*Fearful desolation. No one injured.*' That was a little comfort, for we then knew that all our dear ones were safe; but we wondered whether there would be any house for us to go to when we did get back. There was nothing for us to do but to wait patiently where we were until the line could be at least partially repaired, and we could get back home again. We had therefore ten days of extra holiday among the mountains; but, though the weather was lovely, and the air was cool and delightful, we all wished ourselves back in Berhampur again.

"The only person who was able to leave Darjeeling during those ten days was the Lieutenant-Governor. He was going home to England, and was obliged to get to Bombay by a certain date, in order to catch his steamer. They managed to get him over the broken parts of the line; and we heard that, in some places, the only way they could arrange for him to travel was on the back of an elephant; but railway companies do not provide elephants for the convenience of more ordinary people.

"On the tenth day we were able to start. The train was quite full of belated travellers, and all went well until we got more than half-way down the hill; but then it was found that a great piece of the hill had slipped and fallen, and completely buried the

line. So everybody had to turn out of the train and walk over this part, and then get into another train, which was waiting for them on the other side of the landslip. This took some time, and it was nearly dark before we reached the bottom of the hill, and there got into the train which was to take us over the portion of



"FEARFUL DESOLATION."

the line which had been partially repaired. We could only go very slowly, and while the light lasted we could see traces everywhere of the havoc which the earthquake had caused. Some of the bridges still had great cracks in them; in many places the telegraph posts and wires were lying along the ground, instead of standing up as they should do; the platforms at some of the stations were in no way straight, but curved like the waves of the

sea; and in some places we could see great holes, where portions of the ground had fallen in.

"But it was during the next night we realized that there was some little danger still for those who were travelling. We were fast asleep, but were awakened by a great noise of men, who were shouting loudly. Looking out of the railway carriage, we could just see some dark water flowing beneath us. It appeared that we were on a bridge over a great river, but the bridge was not yet really safe, so they dared not take an engine over it; but men were pushing the carriages over in two parts. The first part had got over safely, but when our part was in the middle of the bridge, a thunderstorm suddenly began, and the men, thinking it was another earthquake, ran off frightened, leaving us there on the dangerous bridge. The stationmaster and the porters were all very anxious about our safety, but at last they got the men to go back and continue their work. You can imagine that we were all very glad when we safely reached the other side.

"We arrived at Berhampur at night, and as we drove the long fifteen miles from the railway station we again and again passed houses which, in the clear moonlight, we could see were all in ruins. The next day we went round and found everywhere that things were very different from what they had been when we left home some six weeks before. Many of the English people were still afraid to live in a house, so there were a good many tents dotted about in which they slept at night.

"Our house was habitable, but every room was more or less injured. One had the ceiling half down, and our bedroom walls looked so shaky that we felt it would not be wise to try and sleep there again till something was done for its repair. So for eight

months we had to turn our sitting-room into a bedroom, and manage as best we could.

"Fortunately very few of the poor people who lived in the mud houses suffered at all, but every one who lived in a brick house suffered more or less. One house, next door to a house in which some of our missionaries lived, fell down flat, just as the cards

AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

will when you blow suddenly on the card-house you have built; but fortunately no one was hurt. All the people living there were able to get safely out in time. Our Bengali minister's house suffered very much; the upper part was so much injured that it had to be entirely rebuilt; and as it was his own house, it meant a great deal of expense, as well as of inconvenience, both to him and to his family.

"Our Bengali chapel, too, was so much injured that it could never be used again; and everywhere the town looked as if it had just been experiencing a siege: there were ruins everywhere; and as we talked with the people, we found many of them had very

THE CHAPEL, AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE.

narrow escapes; but though the damage to property was immense, very few lives had been lost.

"It has been a long, weary time for many of us, getting the various buildings repaired, but there has been one bright side to all our anxiety and distress. Our Bengali Christians said that

they would like to build a chapel of *their own* (the one damaged by the earthquake had been built by *English* people, and the Bengalis were only allowed to use it), so they were given the site of the old chapel, and such of the walls as were not permanently injured; and then right well the native Christians set to work.

THE OPENING CEREMONY AT THE NEW CHAPEL.

"The building is now finished, and the first service was held in it last Christmas Day. It was a festive occasion. The chapel was decorated both inside and outside, and every one felt very joyous and happy, for it had meant a great deal of self-denial to nearly all these people, and they had a right to feel glad and happy

when God so graciously permitted the desire of their hearts to be realized.

"So, you see, God has a wonderful way of bringing good out of evil. If it had not been for the earthquake damaging the old chapel, it might have been a very long time before there would have been enthusiasm and enterprise enough among the native Christians to make them 'arise and build.'

"I cannot say that any of us wish for another earthquake, for it brought us very grave anxiety and expense. I am sure it ought to have cultivated our characters; for it is not easy to keep a quiet, cheerful, and trustful spirit amid all the discomforts that we knew for so many months. But we did not let anything interfere more than we could possibly help with our work among the women and children; and we can never cease to be most thankful for our Father's kind care of us, both during the perils of the earthquake time and during our anxious journey home. Truly His hand was upon us for good."

CHAPTER XV

THE CHILDREN IN INDIAN COSTUMES

WHEN the story was ended they had tea, which was ready punctually at half-past four, and then began the work of dressing-up. What fun it was! Nora, as the eldest, had on a white *sari* with a pretty border. This was arranged over her head, and to one corner was tied a big bunch of keys, for she was to be the chief lady of the house, the mother of the sons who had brought their wives to live with her. She wore heavy gold bracelets on her wrists.

Phyllis was her daughter-in-law, and she too had on a great deal of jewellery, even silver bells on her ankles; but her pretty pink *sari* was pulled well over her face, for she had left her own home, and that was the proper thing for her to do with her dress in her mother-in-law's house.

Muriel was a little widow, another daughter-in-law, but she had on *no* jewels, and only wore a plain white sheet without any border.

Doris was a little school-girl, not yet married, and living at home. She wore a dark blue *sari*, with a wonderful pattern worked at the end in red and green. Her head was uncovered, but her hair was done up into a tight little bow on the top of her head, and adorned with silver stars.

Marjorie was not quite strong enough to take part, but auntie dressed her in a very soft white muslin *sari*, with a pretty border, such as the native Christians wear, and she was able to lie in her hammock and watch and hear all that went on.

The boys were turned into regular Bengali boys. Each had a white *dhuti*, as the garment worn by the boys is called, and round their shoulders Lewis had a bright red shawl, and Bernard a white piece of thin muslin, arranged in a picturesque fashion.

"Crummie" was put on a little table near to Marjorie, and by the time the visitors began to arrive all was quite ready.

Auntie put on a soft white muslin *sari* in which she seemed quite at home, and, as soon as the friends were seated, she arranged the children, and began to describe the pictures she had made with them.

In the first, Lewis sat on a low stool with a book in his hand. By his side on the floor sat his mother, and he was reading to her the lesson he had to learn for the next day. In explaining it, Miss Grey said, "The Bengalis are very anxious indeed for their sons to get on well at school; at Berhampur we have a large school for boys, and the parents send their children there, not because they want them to be Christians, but because they want them to be well educated, and able to take a good position in life. But every boy who studies there hears about Jesus, and learns to read the Bible; and though not very many yet have become Christians, the seed has been sown in many hearts. There are some who have learned there and been willing to give up all for Christ; the present head-master was once a Hindoo boy at this very school, and now he is doing all he can to teach others the truth which he has learned himself."

The next picture represented a cook-room—a kitchen. Over a fireplace made of bricks sat Phyllis, the daughter-in-law, stirring the vegetables with a big iron spoon. Muriel—the widow—was grinding the lentils, and sitting on the floor as she went on with her work. Nora, as head of the house, had in front of her a number of brass plates and a large pot of rice. This she was taking out with her fingers, and making into a big pile in the middle of each plate. The little boys, and Doris, as the school-girl, were sitting about on the ground—and waiting for their food.

"The ladies of the house do a great deal of their own cooking," said Miss Grey; "though they usually have a *jhee*, a female servant, who goes out and does all the buying in the bazaar, and helps generally in the dirtier parts of the work. The food is always the same year in, year out, every day in the morning, and again in the evening, rice and curry. The curries, in a Hindoo house, are never made of anything but vegetables and fish; they vary with the seasons, but the rice is always there. It seems even more of a necessity to them than bread is to us. I have had people tell me, when they were ill, that they had eaten nothing for three or four days. At first I was alarmed, but afterwards I found they only meant that they had not been allowed to have their rice, though they might have had a good deal of milk, or sago and milk, to drink. It did not mean they had literally had nothing. Rice is *the* food to a Bengali."

In the next picture there were only two figures, the head of the house and the little school-girl. The old woman was teaching her little grandchild to make an image out of mud, and then to worship it. "This picture," said Miss Grey, "represents the first religious teaching a little Hindoo girl gets. She is being taught

to make that figure, and to worship the God *Siva*. The prayer she is taught to pray is only that she may be married and have a good husband. When she receives this lesson first she is usually only five years old. Poor little girlie! Do you wonder, friends, that the more we see of them, the more we long to get the girls into our schools, and to teach them to pray to Him who loves the children and will hear and answer prayer?"

NOWELL.

The last picture represented the interior of a zenana. The little school-girl lay on the mat, and beside her sat the widow, fanning her. The daughter-in-law sat by the old lady, and was doing her hair, and the little boys were sitting at one side with their school books, out of which they were preparing the lesson for the next day. Then Miss Grey, dressed as the zenana teacher, went in, and the daughter-in-law, who was learning regularly, fetched out her work. It was a wonderful pair of slippers, on which she was working brilliant, many-coloured flowers. After her lesson Miss Grey sang a Bengali hymn, such as she had often sung to the Indian women.

Those were all the pictures, but before the friends left Miss Grey spoke to them a few earnest words, and told them some of the needs of the work out in India, and asked them to pray and help all they could. In conclusion, she pointed to where "Crummie" stood, and said any gifts for the work in India could be put in there.

Then the children's Indian clothes were taken off, and the

friends left, having had a very enjoyable time at the "Missionary Band Meeting." All felt they understood a little better than they had ever done before how the Bengali people dressed, and something of their manners and customs, and of their various needs too; and I believe each one was a little more anxious to do something more to help those, their brothers and sisters, who needed help so much.

CHAPTER XVI

A NAUGHTY LITTLE SCHOOL-GIRL

IT was another June Saturday afternoon, and it was very hot, but the children looked cool and happy enough as they sat and worked under the shade of the grand old trees. Much chatter went on as usual, for there were many things to tell Marjorie about school life; and now that she met her friends every week, and was every day growing stronger, she took as much interest in school as she had formerly done, and was most anxious for the time to come when she would be able to go to school again with her little friends.

Miss Grey was a little late, for she had been speaking about her work the evening before at a town which was at some distance away; but she had hastened home as quickly as possible, in order not to miss the "Band" meeting.

After she had greeted the children, and they had all settled down, Marjorie said to her, "Oh, auntie! Nora has such a funny story to tell you about her little sister and brother. I expect you remember them: they came here to see me one day when you were at home. Gwen is five years old, and Nowell just six, and they are always doing such funny things."

Miss Grey turned to Nora, and said she would like to hear

about it very much. So Nora began: "On Sunday afternoons I always take care of Gwen and Nowell while nurse goes out, and since we have had our 'Band,' I generally tell them one of the stories you have told us. They love stories, and so I can keep them quiet and happy. But the one they like best is that about little Āki and Phāki, the famine children, and I have had to tell that to them nearly every week. The other morning they were so quiet for such a long time that mother felt sure they must be in some mischief, and went into the nursery to see. They were both seated on the floor, with all their dolls round them. From somewhere Nowell had managed to get a tin of brown paint, and he and Gwen were busy painting the faces, legs, and arms of all their dolls, and also their own pinafores and hands and faces. As soon as they saw mother, Gwen cried out, 'Oh, mummie, come and look—we are making all our dollies into brown Indian children, and then Nowell and me will be missionaries, and go and teach them, like Marjorie's auntie did those two little girls Nora told us about.' It took mother a long time to get their faces and hands clean, and the dolls look dreadful; but Nowell and Gwen don't seem to mind, and they have played with them every day since."

All the children were amused at Nora's story; they all knew the "pickles," as they were called, for Gwen and Nowell were famous for getting into mischief and doing out-of-the-way things.

Just before tea Miss Grey said, "Next week will be our last 'Band' meeting for a time, as we are going away to the sea-side. Suppose, then, those of you who have little brothers and sisters bring them with you, and we will have a story about some tiny Bengali boys and girls. They shall have tea with us, and

about half-past five their nurses can take them home, and then we can have our usual talk together.

That was a delightful idea to them all, and they began to count up how many there would be next week. Gwen and Nowell, of course; then Muriel and Doris had a little sister Olive. She was only five years old, but they knew she would like to come, and Phyllis had one brother younger than herself, small Guy, just four, but she begged to be allowed to bring him.

When this was all arranged and tea over, Miss Grey told them the story of "A Naughty Little School-girl."

"The Christians often have their homes close to the Hindoos, and though that is a good thing in one way, as it enables the Hindoos to see what a Christian life is like, yet it is often a bad thing for the children, for they see and hear all around them much that is not at all good for them.

"So we try to get them, both boys and girls, into Boarding Schools, where they can be taught and trained. They go home for holidays; and, whenever possible, their parents pay something for their food and teaching, just as your fathers do here in England. Some cannot pay much, but we try to encourage them to give as much as they can. Many of the orphans and very poor children are helped by friends in England, who in that way show their interest in missionary work.

"A few years ago, for some time we had not been able to have a Boarding School for our Christian girls, so some of them had gone away to other schools, but a good many were too young to go far away, and yet needed training and teaching which they could not get in their own homes.

"Our difficulty was to get a suitable house; but at last we found one that answered fairly well. It was of a good size, and rather old, and in some ways dilapidated, for the doors did not fasten well, and the floors were somewhat uneven, but we decided to try it. There were about twenty little girls ready to come as boarders, and we fitted up two big rooms as bedrooms, and two others as schoolrooms. I am afraid they did not look comfortable and bright

THREE GIRLS FROM THE BOARDING SCHOOL.

and pretty as your schoolrooms do. We had very little money, and so we had to go in only for the things that were absolutely necessary; and Bengali girls are not used to as much comfort as English girls are, so the rooms did not look as bare to *them* as they would have done to you.

"In the schoolrooms we had some benches and some desks, some of them made from old kerosene oil-boxes, and some of them made

by a man who had not been able to measure properly, and so had made the legs of different lengths, and they needed a good deal of fixing and arranging to make them firm and steady. There was a chair for the teacher, and a little table, and that was all, with the exception of a few Scripture pictures on the walls, which had been sent by some English friends.

"The bedrooms had only beds in them, but such beds as you never see in England. They were like wooden tables with very short legs, and on these there was first a blanket or a kind of thin mattress stuffed with cotton, a pillow, and a sheet, and for covering in the hot weather another sheet, and in the cold weather a blanket. It was not necessary to have a washing stand, or a chest of drawers, or chairs, or a carpet. The children bathed in a separate room, and the little boxes which each child brought with her, and which were arranged round the walls, held all their small stock of clothes.

"A long empty room was the dining-room, and here again we had no furniture save a filter, of native make, for the water; a box, made into a cupboard, to hold some of the plates and glasses, and some mats, on which the children sat at the meal times.

"The kitchen, or cook-room, was outside, and was presided over by a cook, generally an elderly woman, but each little school-girl had to take her turn in helping to cook and prepare the food. They sifted the rice, cut the vegetables, and some of the elder ones even helped to do the actual cooking. When dinner was ready, the little ones sat down on the mats, and the elder ones fetched in plates of rice and curry, which they put before each one; then a blessing was asked, and every child ate with her right-hand fingers, and, when she had finished, took a drink of water from

the glass at her left-hand side, using the remainder of the water to pour over the fingers of the right hand, and so clean them. Then all, except the very little ones, washed their plates and glasses, and put them away in the cupboard.

"School hours were from eleven to four, with a half-hour's break for lunch; and in the early mornings and evenings, besides taking their share of cooking and housework, the elder girls prepared their lessons, and the little ones played in the garden.

"What games did they play at? you ask. At first they did not seem to know how to play as you do; many were full of fever, and all they wanted to do was to sit quietly in the sun. But some were fond of games. They liked mud pies as much as tiny English children; they liked pretending to cook, as they had seen their mothers do. Sometimes the English dollies came out, and then they had a wedding; and sometimes in the evening we joined them, and taught them to play English games and action songs, and I believe they, big and little too, enjoyed them quite as much as you do.

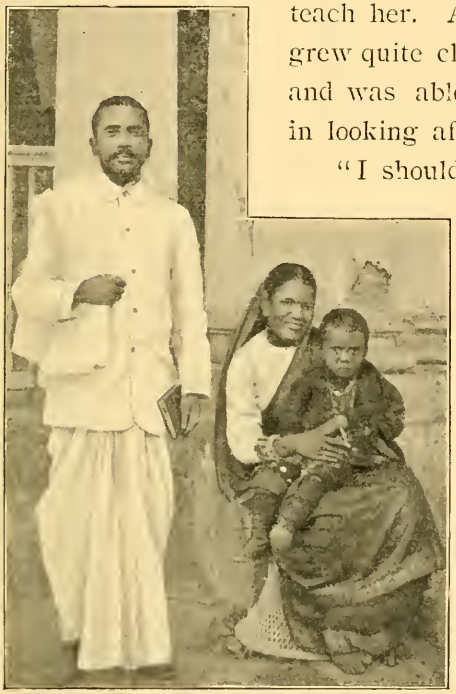
"All seemed happy at school, though some, who had come from unhealthy districts, often suffered a good deal from fever, and had to take a lot of very nasty medicine to get rid of it.

"There was one little girl we were very anxious to get to school. She was the child of Christian parents, but they lived far away from all other Christians, among the Hindoos, and we knew the little girl was learning a great deal that was wrong. But for a long time they refused to let us have the child to teach. At last, when she was about nine years old, 'Little Flame,' for that was the name she went by, came to us. I shall never forget what a wild little creature she was, and yet there was something very

lovable about her. Soon after she came I gave her an English doll, hoping that would help her to settle down. She seemed happy and contented, and then one day I could not find her anywhere; she had run away. Her bits of clothes were left behind, but the dolly she had taken with her. I was a good deal frightened, though I guessed she had gone home; but her father lived on the other side of the great river, and it was a long distance of fifteen miles to his village. It was night when we found she had gone, and nothing could be done until the morning, and then some one went to her father's house and brought her back. When I saw her, I talked very seriously to her, and she promised not to run away again, and seemed inclined to settle down and be happy with us. But this only lasted a few days, and then one morning early I found she was missing. She had an uncle living near the school, so I went to him, and he said he would go and fetch her back. He went the long distance at once, but saw no trace of 'Little Flame,' and afterwards he found that she had crossed over the river a long way from the ordinary ferry, and then gone by rather unfrequented paths to her home. I suppose she was afraid of being followed and caught. It was a long way, and the uncle got in first; he had time to talk to her father and mother before she appeared, and it was decided that, after having some food, she should return at once with the uncle to school.

"Another fifteen miles was a long, weary tramp to the tired child, and my heart felt sore for the little one when she arrived and I saw her little bare feet all blistered with the long walk in the dust and heat. I earnestly hoped she had learned her lesson, and would not try to run away again. It was not that she was unhappy at school, but the roving instinct proved too strong, and

again she ran away. We could not give her up, but it needed much patience and love, and a good deal of firmness too, before 'Little Flame' was conquered, and with the other little folks fitted into school life. She was not a clever little girl as regarded books; she learned to read and write, but that was about all we could teach her. As she grew older, however, she grew quite clever at cooking and needlework, and was able to be a very real help to us in looking after the tiny children.



AN OLD SCHOOL-GIRL.

"I should not like to have many little pupils who gave me as much trouble and anxiety as 'Little Flame' did, but I was very glad our Master let us have her to teach and train for those years; and I hope that when she is a woman she will put into practice the lessons she learned at school.

"Most of the little Bengali girls are very quiet, and do their best to be obedient, and give us as little trouble as possible. Of course they are sometimes naughty, and it seems to be especially hard for them always to tell the truth; but I know many of them are trying hard, and learning where they may get the strength they need to do right day by day. So I am very hopeful about the future Christian women in our part of India."

CHAPTER XVII

SEVEN LITTLE BROWN FRIENDS

DURING the week, in each home, the little ones had been very full of anticipation and excitement, for the bigger children had so often talked of their "Band" meetings, and of the stories Miss Grey had told them, that their interest in missionary work was beginning to be shared, not only by their fathers and mothers, but even by their younger brothers and sisters.

Gwen and Nowell had a great deal to talk about that week, for they were inseparable, and where one went, and what one did, the other always shared.

"You see, Gwen," said Nowell, "those brown people don't know about Jesus, and they want somebody to go and tell them. We can't go, but we can help. Let's send them Miss Josephine, just to show how we love them."

Miss Josephine was the little ones' best doll; it belonged to Gwen, but Nowell loved it just as much as she did, and it shared all their games and fun, and was quite a companion to them. Gwen was not so unselfish as Nowell, and she could not bear to think of losing Miss Josephine, so she burst into tears, saying, "No, no, Nowell, we can't spare her." But Nowell had the stronger will, and rarely gave up anything on which he had set his mind.

The children were out in the garden, both perched on the big

garden roller, and Nowell said: "Look here, Gwen, do you remember what mummie said last Sunday, when we had our good-night story?"

"Yes," said Gwen, drying her tears,—"'bout Jesus and how He loves us."

"And," added Nowell, "mummie said we could show we love Him by helping His little brothers and sisters; and, Gwen, I am sure the brown people are His brothers and sisters—let's give them Miss Josephine."

It took Gwen a long time to decide, but on Saturday morning the pair got from cook a big piece of brown paper and a piece of string, and spent a long time tying up Miss Josephine, and then Nowell invaded father's study, fetched down the big ink-pot and a pen, and wrote in big printed letters,—

FOR THE BROWN BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF JESUS IN INDIA.

This parcel was hidden away in the nursery, but after they were dressed and ready to start, Nowell fetched it. Nora asked him what was in it, but the only answer she got was,—"It's something from Gwen and me—our very own—for India," so she wisely said no more.

It was a large meeting of the "Band" that afternoon, and the little ones soon lost their shyness, for no child could feel anything but happy and at home with Miss Grey. She made them all comfortable, and after a little talk she began her story. Nowell and Gwen sat close together on a rug by Miss Grey's side, and the big brown-paper parcel lay between them. Nowell's earnest little face was all aglow, and he hardly moved his eyes from her face while Miss Grey was speaking.

The story was about "Seven Little Brown Friends."

"In the home where I lived in India were five little boys—little boys who had no father and mother to take care of them, but whom Jesus had sent to us to love and to teach about Himself.

"Little Benie, the gipsy boy, was one of them; two of the others were about his age, Rāju and Nobo. Little Rāju had come to us when quite a tiny baby; for his father and mother both died in one day, and the only person left to look after him was a small uncle of ten years old. The uncle did his best, but the baby did not get on, so we took him into our home to love and train. Nobo we found with a very old grandmother under a tree, and as night was coming on, and we feared the jackals, who come out at that time, might hurt the tiny boy and the old sick woman, we took them both home with us. The grandmother died, and so Nobo came to be a brother to Rāju, and our second little boy.

"The other two brown boys were smaller, and they were such good friends together that we often called them 'David and Jonathan.' Their real names were Sharat and Premie. Both came to us when they were quite small. Premie was then very, very ill. He had a father, but no mother, and the poor man did not know how to nurse and look after his sick child, though he was very fond of him; so he was very thankful when we arranged to take him to live with us. Premie has got quite well long since, and he is now growing a big boy. He is especially fond of going on messages; and therefore, on his seventh birthday, we gave him a little suit just like that of the *chaprassis*, the Indian messenger-servants, and a little badge with 'Junior C.E.' on it. This little laddie knows what it means, and he is trying to be a very faithful little messenger for Jesus' sake.

"Sharat came to us even smaller than Premie. One morning, before we were up, a woman rushed into my bedroom. She was

THE FIVE LITTLE ORPHAN BOYS.

carrying a bonny, fat, brown baby. It had no clothes on its little body, and she rushed up to me and said, 'You must have this baby; you have other little boys, and nobody wants him. If you do not take him, I shall throw him away.'

PREMIE.

"As soon as she had said this, she put the baby into my arms and rushed off. I was very busy with my work just then, and hardly wanted another baby to take care of; but when I opened my daily text-book, what do you think was the text I read? 'Take this child,

and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.' So we took the little baby from Jesus, and many and many a time already we have thanked Him for the gift that He sent us that day.

"India is such a hot country that the baby did not need many clothes in the day-time, and at night we made up a little bed on the floor, in the corner of our room, and there the baby slept.

"He too is getting a big boy now, is getting on well at school, and is such a dear, loving little fellow. As he came to us when he was so tiny, he has no memory of any time when he was taught to worship idols; and though he often sees people praying to these gods of wood and stone, he cannot understand it at all.

"These five little boys were very happy together, but they often wished they had a little sister. One did come for a few months, but she could not stay, because Jesus called her to be with Him in the heavenly home. They never forgot her, and often talked of her; but it was not till the youngest boy was nearly four years old that a little sister came to stay for a longer time. And she was such a tiny girlie, only five weeks old.

"In the hospital in the town there was a woman and her baby girl. I cannot say a *mother* and her baby girl, for this woman was not like a mother; she had no love for her own little child. It was a girl, and so she did not want her; and one day the hospital doctor found that she was trying to sell the child, and so to get rid of her. The doctor—it was a lady doctor—had a kind heart, and so she came round to us and asked us if we could take the baby, and so save it from a sad, and perhaps from a wicked, life. Of course we promised, and soon this tiny girlie came to be our little sunshine, and the pet and playfellow of the five brown boys. We named her Nirmolla, but we called her 'Little Noni.'

"How the boys did love her! It was the greatest treat to be allowed to nurse her for a few minutes; and, as she got older, she

QUITE HAPPY!

was never so happy as when out in the garden playing with them. They never forgot her. She made them gentle and thoughtful, and

as she grew older she tried to do things for them. When about three years old, her great delight was to get one of their coats, and a needle, thread, and button, and to sit down on the ground and tell us she was mending a brother's coat. She is a veritable little bit of sunshine, has crept into every one's heart, and is the merriest and happiest of little maidens.

"Her greatest friend is a brown boy, a little older than herself, who came to us when she was about two years old. His name is Sotish. Poor little laddie! he had a sad life until he came to us. His mother became quite mad, and so had to be taken away to an asylum. She took her little boy with her; but though the matron and the servants there were very fond of him and very kind to him, it was not a good place for a little boy to grow up in, so the doctor who visited these poor mad people asked us if we could take him and care for him. This was how little Sotish, who was about three and a half years old, came to live with us.

"He had evidently been taught to worship idols, and though he could not talk very much, he knew a good many foolish songs, and was very fond of sitting on the floor and singing these songs, and banging his head on the ground, as he had seen the poor women do. We taught him some pretty Christian hymns, and after a few months we hoped he had forgotten all about the old life. But he had not; for on Christmas Eve we had a kind of Christmas tree for all the children, and all the dolls and toys the English children had sent were arranged on easels in our garden. Sotish went out before we were quite ready, along with Sharat, and as soon as he saw the dollies and kites all his heathen memories came back to him, and he was just going to lie down in front of them and put his two little hands together and worship them. Sharat stopped him, and said,

'No, no! you must not pray to those; those are things the friends

SOTISH.

in England have sent: you must pray to Jesus.' And then he came running in to me to tell me what Sotish had wanted to do.

"He knows better now. When he was baptized, we tried to explain to him a little bit of what it meant; and, among other things, we told him he was going to show that he was 'Jisu's little boy.' This he remembered; for one day, when our Bengali pastor called and asked him his name, he said, 'I am Jisu's little boy.' And he understands, too, a little bit of what it means; for on another day, when Noni did something he thought was wrong, he turned to her and said, 'You must not do that; that's not like Jisu's little boy.'

"These two are great friends; both are full of fun and mischief, and both are bright and intelligent and loving.

"The bigger boys are now at school, and only come home to us for holidays, but you can imagine how delighted both the little ones and the big ones are to meet again and have the old games together.

"When you pray, think of these six brown boys and their little sister, and ask Jesus to make them each one the means of leading some dark Indian man, or woman, or child, to give up their idols and to follow the Saviour, whom these dear children have, through nearly all their little lives, been taught to love and serve."

When Miss Grey had finished, it was Nowell who broke the silence, by pushing towards her the brown-paper parcel, and saying, "Gwen and me wants to help the brown boys and girls." The tears gathered in auntie's eyes as she read the queer inscription, and when she opened it she at once realized something of what the gift meant to those two little folks, and she said, quite softly, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, . . . ye have done it unto Me." Then she kissed Nowell and Gwen, and told them she would take "Miss Josephine" out with her to India, and perhaps

some day a letter would come telling them of the little child whom their dolly had made happy.

There was still a little while before tea, and auntie had some pictures to show the children, some of them pictures of the very children she had been telling them about.

Tea over, and the little ones gone, auntie and the bigger ones settled themselves for another hour's work and chat. Bernard voiced the thoughts of them all when he said, "I wish this were not our last meeting for two months; I do like our Saturdays so."

"So do I," said Miss Grey. "We shall all be scattered for holidays, but after we come back there will be time for a few more meetings before I leave for India again. I have been thinking a good deal about the holidays; don't let us forget our far-away brothers and sisters while we are enjoying ourselves. Perhaps we may meet some friends who have never thought of helping them; if so, let us, if we can find an opportunity, tell them some of the things we have been learning, and try to get them interested. Perhaps, too, wet days will come while we are at the seaside or in the country; then let us try to go on with some work we are doing to send to them. I am quite sure we shall all have the very best holiday we ever had, if we are thinking of somebody besides ourselves."

The children promised to try, and very warm and loving were the good-byes that were said to Miss Grey and to Marjorie when they took their leave.

CHAPTER XVIII

MARJORIE'S HOLIDAY

MARJORIE was growing stronger every week, and the doctor had advised her mother to take her right away from London to the seaside for a couple of months in the summer. So Mr. Merton had taken a little cottage on the south coast for all July and August. Mother, auntie, and Marjorie were to go down on the first of July, and the father promised to come and spend the Sundays with them; and in August he would get his holiday, and he and Rex would join them for the whole month.

The journey was accomplished safely, and though Marjorie was a good deal tired when they reached their destination, yet it did her no harm, and she and mother and auntie had a very quiet, restful time together. She still had to lie down a good deal, but her father had sent down from London for her use a delightfully easy little carriage in which she could lie and be wheeled about.

A boy—Tom Smith by name—was found, and engaged to come every day and take Marjorie out. Every fine morning they would start soon after breakfast, taking their lunch with them, and go to some pretty spot, either close by the sea or away in the lovely country, and there mother and auntie would sit and work, and Marjorie would lie, and read or talk.

Tom was a rough country lad, but Mrs. Merton had been attracted by his honest-looking face, and she was not disappointed, for he proved willing and useful, and very careful in wheeling Marjorie.

Marjorie and auntie had many talks about the brown boys and girls, and Tom, who usually threw himself down on the grass near by when they stopped, would listen attentively. It was all fresh to him, but he was too shy to make any remarks. Marjorie was too full of the subject to keep it in, and soon she began to talk to Tom as he wheeled her so carefully day by day.

One day she said, "Do you go to Sunday-school, Tom?"

"Yes, miss; we has a fine school and a fine teacher, and I goes every week."

"Does your school help to send the story of Jesus to the heathen people?"

"Well, miss, we allus has a collection every Sunday, but we don't know much about where the money goes."

"Don't you sometimes have a missionary come to your school, and tell you about the people far away who don't know about God and His love?"

"Not for a long time, miss; our minister thinks we have got plenty to do helping the people at home; they do sometimes have a meeting in the church, but the missionary don't come to the school."

"Oh, Tom! I wish you could have auntie to come and speak to your school, for she could tell you of so many people who have never heard of Jesus, and then I know you would all want to help."

"Well, miss, we shouldn't mind her; she be real interesting, and

we'd all come and hear her; but it ain't no fun to give your money, and not know what's done with it."

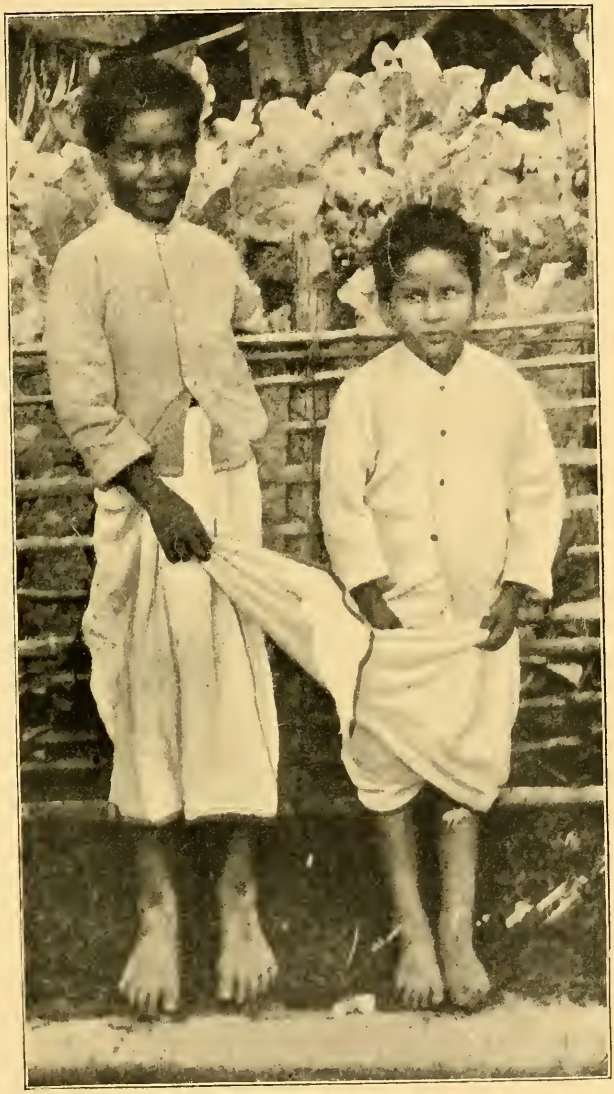
"Shall I lend you a book that will tell you about the people in India where auntie lives, Tom?" was Marjorie's next question.

Tom's eyes sparkled as he said, "Yes, miss," for this rough country lad, who had never had much education, had a great longing to know, and had read all the books he had come across. So before he left that day Marjorie lent him *The Land of Idols*, a book she loved very much, and he promised to read it all. And he did read it, as Marjorie soon found out by the questions he asked her. He was too shy to talk to Miss Grey, but as he read, and first realized that people worshipped idols made of wood or stone or mud, his whole soul was stirred, and very many were the questions that he asked.

Marjorie had told auntie what he said about the Sunday-school, and Miss Grey longed to have an opportunity of interesting the children in the great work. And presently the opportunity came. The place they were in was only a village, and they soon got to know a good many of the people, and among them the teacher of Tom's class. He was an earnest Christian man, but the claims of the people in the far-away lands had never come to him, and he had never heard the call of his Master to work for them and help them, so he had never tried to interest his class in missionary work.

Tom had not been silent about the new interest that had come into his life, and the meeting of the teacher with Miss Grey had deepened the impression; so one day he spoke to the superintendent, and they agreed to ask Miss Grey to come on Sunday afternoon, and tell the scholars something about her missionary work.

You may be quite sure Miss Grey did not refuse this opportunity



TWO MERRY BENGALI BOYS.

that God had sent her, and, to Marjorie's great delight, it was arranged she should also go to school that afternoon, and lie in her chair and listen to auntie.

Though it was only a village, there was a good Sunday-school, and when Miss Grey arrived she found the little building nearly full. She had taken with her a few curios, and first she described some of the gods the people worship, and some of their pilgrimages and washings in the Ganges. Then she made a word picture of a Hindoo home, and tried to help them to realize the condition of the people, and especially the sadness of the widows, when they know nothing of the Lord Jesus Christ.

After that she told them of some of the ways in which the missionaries were trying to help them. Sometimes she made the children laugh, especially when she described a village Sunday-school where the boys were mostly cowherds, and each came to school with his long stick, leaving his cow outside. She told them the order in that school was not so good as in theirs, for these cows sometimes strayed away, and sometimes quarrelled, and so the boys had to sit where they could keep one eye on the teacher and the other on the cow, and be ready to jump up and separate those that quarrelled, or fetch back any that wandered too far away.

I cannot tell you all Miss Grey said that afternoon, but she ended with a little story showing how some of the children were learning to give up their idols and follow Jesus. This was the story:—

"A teacher had a Sunday-school class of little Hindoo girls. They attended a day school, and their parents allowed them to come for an hour on Sundays also, though they had no desire for the children to be Christians. These little girls were taught at home to worship idols, but week by week the Christian teacher told them of

Jesus, and tried to lead them to love Him. Once a month she gave each child a little book, that they might take them home and read them there. One little girl was called Ganoda; she came very regularly to school, and always listened well, and one day she had a little book given her about the death of Jesus. She read it going

A CHRISTIAN GIRLS' SCHOOL. (*see page* 156).

home, and was so interested in it that she began to read it aloud to her parents. Her father listened for a little while, then snatched it from her, tore it up, and forbade her to go to school again. Poor little Ganoda! She had no more opportunities of hearing about Jesus; but she never forgot what she had heard at school, and what

she had read in her little book. The days and the months went by, and then little Ganoda was taken very ill with fever—the fever of the country. Her father and mother loved her very much, and did all they could to make her better, but she got worse, and then one day she said to her mother, 'I do wish I could see my old teacher once more.' The mother told the father, and he could not bear then to deny his little girl anything, so the teacher was sent for. She came, very grieved to find little Ganoda so ill, but very glad to see her again. Ganoda *was* glad to see her; she could not talk much, but she whispered, 'I am going to that Jesus you told me about. He knew I could not serve Him here, so is taking me away to be with Him for ever.'

"Soon after that she passed away to be with Him who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me.'"

Miss Grey did not say much more, but her talk had started new thoughts in many hearts, and now that school is never without its Missionary Sunday. If you were to pay it a visit, you would find a picture of the *John Williams* ship on the wall on the boys' side, and on the girls' side a picture of a brown Indian school-girl. These are sure signs that the scholars are now interested in the "New Year's Offering for the Missionary Ships," and are doing something definite to help to train a future teacher for India.

These changes did not come all at once, but the seed sown that Sunday afternoon did not die; it is still growing and bearing fruit, as all seed sown in God's name must and will in His good time.

But I have been going on too fast. At the beginning of August Mr. Merton and Rex came down, and then the delightful holiday

was ten times more delightful. Marjorie was well enough by that time to go sometimes for a drive, or sometimes on the sea in a boat, and it was a great joy for her to begin to share pleasures with other people, as she had done in the days before she hurt her back. The weather was warm and fine all through August, and all were very sorry as the time drew near for the return home.

One evening, almost the last, when Mrs. Merton came down from putting Marjorie to bed, she found Rex alone on the verandah. As soon as he saw her, the boy said, "Sit down, little mother; I want to have a talk with you, so I stayed in. Father and auntie have gone for a walk."

Mrs. Merton sat down in a low chair, and Rex threw himself on a rug beside her, with his head on her lap, and for a time neither spoke.

Then Rex said, "You know, mother, I have always wanted to be a doctor, and you and father said that was the life you would choose for me. I still want it, but, mother, it must be as a medical missionary. I *must* do something to help those in the darkness to find Jesus, and I believe a medical missionary has the greatest opportunities of any. You will let me go, won't you, mother?"

Mrs. Merton put her hand on the tangled, curly head on her knee, and said, "Yes, Rex, your father and I will give you gladly; it has been our prayer ever since you came to us that the Master might claim you for that work. Nothing *could* give us greater joy than to give our boy to such a life."

Rex rarely spoke of the things that touched him most, but that night mother and son had a long talk, such as neither would ever forget. Rex had matriculated, and the time was coming near when he would leave school and begin in earnest his study as a doctor.

Mr. Merton was a quiet, reserved man, but Rex did not soon forget his father's hand-clasp, and the few words he said, when they met the next morning. Mr. Merton counted it indeed an honour to have his son choose such a life. Auntie's joy when she heard of Rex's decision I will leave you to imagine.

The holiday had done for Marjorie all, and more than all, that had been expected. She would still have to be careful, and would not be able to go to school just at present, but she was able to walk about and to give up most of her invalid habits; so it was a very happy home-going, though at times all remembered how short auntie's stay in England was becoming, and how soon the date for her to sail again would come round.

CHAPTER XIX

THE THREE HOMES

TO the first Band meeting, after the holidays, all the little folks came armed with parcels, for not one of them had forgotten Miss Grey's suggestion that they should do something for their brown brothers and sisters in the holiday time.

It was good fun unpacking all these parcels. Nora had been staying with some cousins in the country, and had so interested them in the missionary work, by repeating the stories which Miss Grey had told them at the Band meetings, that they had volunteered to help her, and the result was a nice parcel of some six pinafore frocks, big enough to fit a little child of two years old.

Phyllis had not been away, but she had spent some of her holiday in dressing a pretty dark-haired doll, and very fine the little lady looked in a bright red frock trimmed with silver braid, a yellow sash, and a necklace of gold-coloured beads twisted twice round her neck.

Marjorie too had dressed a doll—of course a dark-haired one. It was dressed in yellow silk, and had a blue sash and a red hat, and was very fine indeed.

Muriel and Doris had made two pretty blotters. Inside there was blotting paper, and also a few sheets of note paper, with a pretty

penholder; but the covers were the delight of the little girls, who had taken a great deal of trouble with them. They had been to the seaside for their holiday, and in the middle of each cover they had pressed some pretty bits of seaweed, and all round they had pasted quite a variety of picture scraps.

Miss Grey told them she was very glad to have these blotters, for they were just the very nicest present to give to the teachers at Christmas time; so you can imagine their delight.

The boys too had been busy, and brought some capital little scrap-books. They remembered Miss Grey had once said how much more useful small size scrap-books were than large size, so they had obtained some old "exercise" books, and filled all the pages with coloured pictures and scraps; and for the covers they had used coloured papers cut into all kinds of patterns, making very pretty and attractive little books. Bernard had made three and Lewis had made two.

There was so much to tell each other now the children met again, for the first time, after so long a parting, that the time passed all too quickly, and there did not seem to be the need of a very long story this time from Miss Grey.

But, as usual, she was ready with something; she told them that, instead of one long story, she would give them three word pictures of Indian girls in their homes.

The Three Homes

"The three homes, into which I am going to give you a peep to-day, were not in *my* part of India, but away up in the North-West Provinces, where the people speak another language, eat a different kind of food, and dress differently from our Bengalis. Instead of so

much rice at every meal, they use flour, which they make into very thin flat cakes which they call '*chapattis*.' These look very tough and indigestible; but use is everything, and all the people in that part eat them constantly, and seem to enjoy them very much.

"Instead of the pretty white *sari* which our Bengali women wear, the women in that part of India wear a full skirt, a little jacket, and then a small piece of muslin, called a *chudda*, round their heads and shoulders; and the men wear full trousers and coats, and they have big turbans on their heads.

"The first home was in a city on the banks of the great river Ganges—a city which is full of temples and idol shrines. There lived in this city a girl who was taught to worship idols, especially to worship Ram, the great Indian hero-god, whose very name is said to be so powerful that if any one dies repeating it he will go straight to heaven.

"Not very far from her home there was a peculiarly sacred village, which was regarded as the dwelling-place of a great goddess, and in order to worship her, many people made long and tiring pilgrimages to this village.

"The girl's name was Gauri, and for a time her parents had allowed her to be taught by the missionary ladies. She was getting on nicely, and seemed interested in what she heard; but, one day, when her teacher went to the house, her friends said she was ill, and would not be able to have any lessons again, 'for,' they added, 'her mother learned to read and then went mad, and if Gauri learns, she too will go mad some day.' So the lessons had to be discontinued, but after a time the missionary ladies were allowed to pay her an occasional visit. During these visits she learned a good many hymns and texts. One hymn she was especially fond of, which

began—'Jesus Christ is my Saviour; the river is deep, and the boat is old, Jesus is He who carries me across'; and sometimes she would say these words and talk about them as if she was really interested; and then when the teacher went at another time she could not get

THE ZENANA TEACHER.

her to say anything at all. That, however, was only when some of her relations were about, for she was very much afraid of them. One day when the missionary went to see her, she said, 'I do not believe in Ram now,' and she asked the lady to pray with her to the true God. I think Gauri really believes in Jesus; but she is one

of those girls shut up in a zenana, who are unable to come right out and confess Christ, though with real love to the Saviour in their hearts.

"The second little girl about whom I want to tell you lived in this same great city, but she and her little sister were allowed to go to school. There they sat, on mats on the ground, and learned to read and write. Their slates were wooden boards, and they wrote on them with a kind of wooden pen dipped in chalk and water. At school they heard every day about Jesus and His love. Little Sundar was a very bright child, and soon became the head of the school, and the lessons she learned sank into her heart. She found out that the idols could not help her; and one day she told her mother she could not worship them any more. The mother said, 'What the English ladies say is quite true, but it is the *custom*, and so you *must* give food to the idol.' And little Sundar, against her will, was made to do this day after day.

"Presently the time came for Sundar to be betrothed, and this was a very expensive affair, for, according to *custom*, her friends would have to feast four hundred people, and for them to do this would mean getting into debt. Neither the father nor the mother wanted to do it; but, as the mother said one day to the missionary, 'It is *custom*, and if we don't do it we shall get a bad name.'

"*Custom* makes it so hard for these poor people to break away from what they know to be wrong, and to do what they feel sure is right. For a time, after the betrothal, Sundar went on coming to school; then she went right away with her husband to another part of the country. I wonder whether she has forgotten all she learned at school!

"The third home was in a village just outside this large city. In the village there were several small conical-shaped temples, very near to each other, and outside every one of them there was a bull carved in stone. These were temples dedicated to Shiv,—the great god, as he is called,—and the bull is the animal on which he is supposed to ride; so in this part of India the bull is represented outside all the Shiv temples.

"This village was near the law courts, and one of the pleaders in the court had his home in it. One evening some Christian women came into the village, and, going to the pleader's house, they sang some Christian hymns, and talked to the women whom they found there. They saw the pleader too, and he said that he would like his little girls to be taught.

"A few days later one of the missionary ladies went to the house; the pleader was in his garden, and, advancing to meet her, he bowed very politely, gave her a chair to sit on, and then said that his women-folk did not wish to hear any more. The lady left after a short chat, saying she would call another day, and see if the women had changed their minds. She did so, and seeing a servant woman, sent her in to ask if she might come and speak to the ladies of the house. Very soon the servant returned bringing a chair, which she placed in the courtyard, and on which she asked the English lady to sit.

"But no ladies of the house were to be seen at first. Presently the missionary noticed a movement behind some pieces of sacking that were hung up in the front of a verandah which opened on to the courtyard. Behind this sacking were evidently three ladies, who listened while a hymn was being sung. When the missionary brought out a picture to show and to explain, several times she

noticed a head bobbed up above the curtain for a few seconds ; and one of the ladies arranged a little slit in the curtain and peeped out; but all the missionary could see was one eye, so she had to go on talking to an audience almost altogether unseen.

"But two little girls came out, and they stood by the missionary, though they were too shy to talk, or to become at all friendly.

" The ladies sent a message asking the missionary to come and see them again, and so she went again and again, sometimes getting a hearing, and sometimes being told they had no time and did not want to listen. Still, she was glad to have had an opportunity of telling about Jesus in that Hindoo home, and she did not forget to pray for those to whom she had spoken in so singular a way.

"Do you know why I have told you about these three Hindoo homes? It is because I want you to remember that there are many homes like these, where the missionaries go from time to time, and tell the story of Jesus; but they altogether lose sight of their pupils, and after a time the door is even shut, and they are forbidden by the head of the house to visit any more; and yet they are glad to have sown some little of God's good seed, and they do hear of cases in which it has proved to have fallen on *good* ground. Rarely, however, do they themselves see the fruit which springs from the seed which they have sown ; and I want you to join me in praying that even this little scattering of the good seed may be blessed, and that these women may be led to think more about the gracious Saviour of whom they have heard, and may come to give Him the love of their hearts and the service of their lives. For God, by His good Spirit, can make even a tiny little mustard seed of saving truth grow into a big tree of blessing."

CHAPTER XX

CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOURERS

THERE were still two more Band meetings in September before Miss Grey had to sail. All this time she was very busy packing, and at the first of these two meetings she put out all the things which the children had made, for them to see once more before they were put away in her boxes. There was quite a fine show: nearly a dozen dolls, some knitted scarves, and some ten or twelve scrap-books, besides the things the children had done in the holidays.

The talk at this meeting turned on "Christian Endeavour" work, for it was just the time when a great "Christian Endeavour Convention" was being held, and those of the children who had older brothers and sisters had heard it talked about a good deal in their homes. During the holidays Nora had heard about the "Christian Endeavour" from the cousins with whom she had been staying, and she had even attended one or two of the meetings held by their "Junior Endeavour Society"; so it was Nora who asked Miss Grey if they had any Christian Endeavour meetings in India.

"Christian Endeavour" was a subject in which Miss Grey was very much interested, and she was very glad to tell the children something about her fellow "Endeavourers" out in India.

She said: "For the past seven years we have had a strong

'Christian Endeavour Society' among the women, and lately we have started one also among the men, and one among the children. The women and elder girls meet every week, on the Friday afternoons, and there are generally a good number present. Some are Christian girls who have been taught in our boarding schools; some were once Hindoos, or Mohammedans, but have learned about Jesus Christ, and are seeking day by day to serve Him. Some are quite old, but they love to come and take their part, and some are girls only in their teens; but they all attend regularly, and are trying to find ways in which they can work for our Master.

"Let me tell you about one or two of them. One woman was a Hindoo some few years ago; she lived with her mother, and though they were very pleased when the teachers went to see them, and read and talked to them, still they went on worshipping idols, and at last they left their home to go right away on a pilgrimage to some holy place. They were away two years, but I don't think it was a happy time for either of them; I know a great trouble came to the younger woman, for her mother died, and she came back all alone to our town, and then came to us, telling us that she wanted to be a Christian. We took her into our Home, and tried to teach her, and also to find some work for her to do. She could not see very well, so she could not do needlework; but when she heard we had a cow, she begged to be allowed to look after it as her work. We said she might do so, and she certainly looked after the cow very well; but not only did she feed it,—she actually worshipped it! But after a time she learned better than this, and now, day by day, she is really trying to follow Jesus, and has been teaching a poor blind beggar woman, who lives with her, to love and serve Him too. Both these women come to our 'Christian Endeavour' meetings.

NONI WRITING TO FRIENDS IN ENGLAND.

"Another member, who comes very regularly, is the wife of our Bengali pastor. Both she and her husband were high-caste Hindoos, but he went to one of our mission schools and heard of Christ, and after some time he felt that he must give up everything and become a Christian. At first he had to leave his wife in the Hindoo home; but, after some time, and rather a long time too, she joined him, and was willing to be taught about the Saviour whom her husband had learned to love.

"She has little children, so she is not able to join the Bible women, as they go about from village to village; but, like all 'Christian Endeavourers,' she has found some work to do for her Master. It is Sunday-school work, and week by week, at first in her own house, and then, when more children came, in a schoolroom near by, she has a class of little Hindoo children, to whom she teaches a Christian hymn and tells some Bible story.

"Two women who now come to, and enjoy, the meetings, came to us with their children in the famine time, and they are working hard, while their children are in our schools being trained and taught. I wish you could see how different they all look from the miserable, half-starved folks who took refuge with us nearly four years ago.

"All our teachers are 'Christian Endeavourers,' and all are ready to take part in the meetings.

"What sort of meetings do we have? you want to know. They vary a good deal. Of course we have the monthly Consecration meeting; then sometimes a Praise meeting, and as we have members who speak different languages, these are very interesting meetings, for I have known hymns sung in six or seven languages at one meeting. Sometimes we have a missionary meeting, and the missionary committee try to find interesting facts about the work that

is going on in other parts of the world to tell our members. Then another day we have a Sunday-school meeting, and that is always most interesting. Almost all the 'Endeavourers' are Sunday-school teachers, and they are most enthusiastic over their work; so at our Sunday-school meeting the secretary of the committee brings to the notice of other members different ways of helping the children, and tells them of some of those who have been u usually successful as Sunday-school teachers.

"We have also, especially just before holiday times, a Thanksgiving meeting; and I wish English 'Endeavourers' could come to these meetings, and hear our members as they tell of encouragement and help in their work for the Master, and then pray for blessing on the past work, and seek for strength for better service in the future.

"We have a 'Sunshine Committee,' or, as it is literally translated, '*a Giving Joy to Others*' Committee. Its members see that there are flowers on the Communion table in Church on Sunday; they visit any who are ill; sometimes they go to the hospital; and they arrange the social meetings which we have from time to time.

"Indian 'Endeavourers,' especially the women, are not so free as English 'Endeavourers' are, but they are doing what they can, and I believe the meetings from week to week are a real help to them in their efforts to follow and serve Christ.

"I cannot tell you much about the 'Junior Endeavour Society.' It was only just started when I left India. But I saw a letter from a little lad the other day, in which he says they have such nice 'Endeavour' meetings, and are saving up their pennies to help in sending food to the poor famine people. Perhaps some day I may be able to tell you more about the little folk and their meetings."

The elder members of the Band had been greatly interested in Miss Grey's talk, and Nora said that she should write and tell her cousins about the 'Christian Endeavourers' in India, for she knew they would be interested.

It was a long time before the children got away that evening, for they remembered only too well that the next was the last meeting at which Miss Grey would be present, as she was to sail in less than a fortnight, and they all had something special they wanted to say to her.

But at last they had all gone, and then Marjorie helped auntie pack away the dolls and other things; but she could not help saying, "Oh, auntie! I wish you were unpacking instead of packing; I do wish you could stay in England ever so much longer!"

Auntie turned round on hearing this, and kissed Marjorie, saying, "England is very lovely, darling, and it has been a very happy time amongst you all again; but, Marjorie, there is so much need of missionaries out in India, that I cannot but long to get back to the women and the children, who have so few people to care for them and help them for Jesus' sake."

CHAPTER XXI

FINANCIAL

IT was the last Band meeting before Miss Grey sailed again for India, and to-day the money which had been collected was to be counted, and the members of the Band were to decide what should be done with it.

"Crummie" had been full more than once during the year, but the money had all been put carefully away uncounted, for the children thought it would be much more interesting to count it all together at the last meeting before Miss Grey left. So the put-away money was brought out, and "Crummie" was emptied on to the table, round which the children sat, and for a short time all of them were busy putting the money into little piles. When they counted it, to their great joy it came to just six pounds—a bigger sum than any of them had thought it would be. Auntie, too, was delighted, and she suggested that, leaving the money on the table, they should get their work and discuss together what should be done with it.

The work was found, and, as soon as they were seated, Phyllis said: "Please, Miss Grey, will you tell us first what we *could* do with it, and then we will talk it over and decide."

The others thought this would be a very good way to manage, so after thinking a few moments, auntie began: "There are a great

many ways in which you might use the money to help your Bengali brothers and sisters. I will tell you of a few.

"First, four pounds a year will keep a boy, such as little Raju or little Benie, in the Boys' Boarding School for one year; it is enough to pay for his food and clothing, and to help towards his education. Second, the same sum will pay for the food and clothing and teaching of a little girl, either in our home or in the Girls' Boarding School. Third, we want help for the schools, where little Hindoo girls, like Podo, come and learn day by day; they cost money, and you could, if you liked, help to pay the salary of one of the teachers. Fourth, you could pay part of the salary of a Bible woman—one who goes to take the story of Jesus to the villages—or of a zenana teacher, who teaches the poor women shut up in their zenanas. Fifth, you could pay for the training of a convert: that is, of a woman who has decided to give up her idols, and wants to follow Jesus, but who is often very ignorant and needs a good deal of teaching.

"I think among all these you will find something to suit you; but, before you decide, there is one word I want to say. India, with its great numbers of dark, superstitious people, is only one part of the wide world. In China, in Africa, in Madagascar, in New Guinea, and in the South Sea Islands, there are still many, many people who have never yet heard of Christ; and our great Missionary Society has work in all these places. You may not be able to do very much, and I think it is very nice for you to help some special work in India; but, when you distribute the money, remember the other places, and always send some part of it direct to the Missionary Society, for them to use wherever they feel it is most needed. That will help to make you interested in missionary work

all over the world; and you will never forget that God wants all men *everywhere* to know and love Him."

Choosing was rather difficult work, but after a good deal of talk they at length decided that they would send two pounds to the Missionary Society for the general work, and give four pounds for the support of a little child at Miss Grey's station. She was requested to find one as soon as she got back, and to write and tell them about her. This she promised to do, and also to send them patterns of little garments that would fit the child, and which they could make and send out to her. And as Miss Grey was taking a camera back with her, she was able also to promise them a *photo* of the little child whom they were going to adopt.

There was not time for a very long story, but Miss Grey had a short one ready about the leper folk, and the good work that is being done among those most pitiably suffering men and women.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LEPER FOLK

"THERE is one class of people in India of whom I have not told you anything,—I mean the poor lepers. These poor people —men, women, and even little children—are suffering from a most dreadful disease; and when it once seizes a person, there is no cure for him: he just goes on getting worse and worse until he dies. Everywhere in India these lepers are to be seen; some of them have lost their fingers or their toes, and some of them have the disease so badly in their faces that they hardly look like human beings. They are not able to do any work, and often, when the disease begins, they are turned out of their homes, and spend their lives in going about in the heat, in the rain, and in the cold, begging for a few pence with which to buy food. It is a very miserable, unhappy life for them, and dangerous, too, for other people, for there is the fear lest those who come in contact with them should catch the disease and become lepers themselves.

"When the missionaries went to India, they soon felt they must not leave out the poor lepers, for though no medicine could heal their bodies, the love of Jesus could come into their souls, and bring light

and cheer even amidst all their pain and suffering; and perhaps kindly care, and the provision of some medical comforts, might even help to make their pain and trouble a little less. In many places the missionaries have started Leper Asylums.

"There are many of these lepers in the hill districts, and so one

A LEPER'S HUT.
(*Kindly lent by the Mission to Lepers.*)

of these homes or asylums for them is near Almora. I shall never forget seeing this one. We had, first, a very long journey by the train; then we had travelled for two days among the great hills, sometimes high up where the air was cool and fresh, sometimes

down by the rivers that ran through the valleys, where it was almost as hot as in the plains that we had left behind.

"After climbing our last hill, we saw on our right, the 'Leper Asylum.' There were quite a number of little, low, barrack-like buildings, with a church in the centre. The settlement was very beautifully situated, and there were a good many fine trees about.

"Later on we visited these poor lepers. They live in little houses,—two together,—the women in one part of the grounds and the men in another. It was very good to see how these poor folk, living together, helped each other. One who had hands cooked for one who had none; one who could walk tended another who could only lie down, and so on. Spite of their dreadful suffering, they all looked happy, for in this asylum nearly all the lepers have learned to love Jesus Christ,—not quite all yet, but a very great many of them have.

"We went to a service in their chapel. The poor lepers sat on the floor. Many of them had learned to read, and they joined with all their hearts in the service. We sat on a little platform at the end of the room.

"It was a very sad sight to see so many suffering so hopelessly; and yet these lepers looked so different from those whom we had so often seen begging in our streets. Some of the lepers in the asylum were quite as ill, but then they were cared for and looked after, and, best of all, they had learned to love Jesus, and were looking forward to being with Him in the Heavenly Home, where there is no more pain or sorrow.

"But let me tell you two little stories about lepers. The one is a very sad one, about a little boy; the other is a brighter one, about a little girl.

"Little Marcus was a bright, happy little boy, living in the Boys' Home in Almora. He learned his lessons, and played his games with the other boys, and seemed bright and well and happy. But, as he grew older, he did not seem so strong, and those who watched him began to fear that he was beginning to have the dreadful leprosy. One day he burnt his fingers very badly, but he did not feel it at all, for they were quite dead because of the disease; so then there was no doubt, and he had to leave his happy home and his playfellows, and go away down to the asylum to live. Poor little lad! how he did beg not to be sent to live among the lepers! But his friends could do nothing, and he had to go. They cheered him all they could, and gave him a piece of ground to make a garden, and a pet rabbit to play with; but it made their hearts ache to think of all the pain and trouble and suffering that were in store for him.

"He is still in the asylum, I believe; he is a man now, and very useful in teaching the other poor lepers about the Saviour whom he loves.

"The other story is not so sad. Some eighteen or twenty years ago a poor woman was plodding wearily along a road right up among the mountains. She had been turned out of her home, for it had been discovered that she was a leper; so, with her little baby in her arms, she was trudging wearily to a place a long distance off, where she had heard there were people who were good to lepers. When she got there—oh, so tired!—she was not disappointed, for the kind missionary ladies took her in, and sent her to a clean, comfortable home, where other lepers lived.

"The baby was a bonny, healthy little thing, and when the missionary saw her she said to the mother: 'If she lives with you

and among the other lepers, she may grow up to suffer in the same way herself; suppose you leave her with us, and we will take care of her, and you can come and see her once a week.'

A LEPER GIRL.
(*Kindly lent by the Mission to Lepers.*)

"It was a hard thing for the poor mother to decide, for the baby was the only thing of her own in all the world,—and, though she was but a heathen woman, her heart was full of mother-love. But she loved her baby more, far more, than she *loved herself*, and,

to save it from the life of a leper, she gave it up; for she knew only too well what it meant to have this dreadful disease.

"She came to see her child every week, and was glad as she saw her grow and get more intelligent; but she never touched her, never kissed her own dear little girl, because she was so afraid of giving her the disease.

"Little Phœbe, as she was called, got on very nicely, and after a time went to school, where among other things she learned English, and, best of all, she gave her heart to Jesus, and tried to serve Him day by day.

"When school days were over, she taught some little Hindoo girls in a school for three years; and then some one was wanted to be matron to the girls in a large orphanage, and Phœbe was chosen for this work. She has a busy life now, for there are sixty girls under her care, some of them orphans, and some of them the children of lepers, like herself; and she looks after their food and clothes, and is like an elder sister to them.

"She is very patient with them too, for she remembers the days when friends were good and patient with her, and for Christ's sake she tries to be the same to the girls in her charge. She is well herself, I am glad to say, and I do not think there is any fear of her becoming a leper, as her poor mother was.

"Before I stop, I think you will like to hear of a very kind and gracious thing that these poor lepers in the Almora Asylum did not long ago. Each leper is allowed a certain quantity of food each day; it is not a very large quantity, nor should we consider it very appetising, but they like it and are very grateful for it.

"A little while ago a lady who visited these lepers sent them each a little present—it was something less than a *penny* each. This, she said, they were to use in buying something specially nice to take with their food. But the lepers had heard about the famine in India, and some of them decided to give their pence to those who were starving. Others said, 'No; that is not our own money—it is a present; we must do something ourselves to help the famine sufferers.' And they decided to give one day's food each. There were ninety-six lepers there, and all but eight or nine agreed to this.

"When the missionary was told of their decision, he said, 'That is all right; we must not compel anybody to give; let those who give, give cheerfully.' But the lepers said, 'No; we will talk to those who are unwilling; it would be so much better if we *all* did it.'

"The next Sunday, after the service, they all came to the missionary, and said, 'We are all agreed, and we want you to observe with us Tuesday as a day of fasting and prayer.'

"Of course he agreed, and he says, 'It was deeply pathetic, on the Tuesday morning, to find these poor suffering people, who never get any abundance, instead of waiting around the door of the store-room for their usual allowance of food, sitting round the Saviour's feet, thanking Him for His love and goodness to them, and praying that He would bless the dying parents and starving orphans in the famine districts.'

"The money, equal in value to the food which would have been eaten that day, amounted to about thirteen shillings.

"I wonder if we, who have so much comfort and so much happiness, are as ready to deny ourselves for the sake of others as these poor lepers were? Let *us* try to help *them*, for in many parts of

India the lepers have still nowhere to go, and no one to care for them and teach them. And, remember, the lepers too are some of those for whom the Saviour died, and He wants them to be His disciples; so we must not dare to neglect them; for if they are Jesus Christ's brothers and sisters, they must be our brothers and sisters too."

CHAPTER XXIII

MISS GREY'S RETURN

IT was hard work for the children to say "good-bye" to Miss Grey, for she had become such a very dear friend to them while she had been at home; but at last it was done, and they went away, all so sorry that she would not again be at their Missionary Band meetings; but they were glad and proud to think that they could still go on working with her and for her, and they were determined to do all that was in their power to make their Band meetings a real success, and to help in the great work which Miss Grey had been able to make so real to them—the work of winning "the whole world" for the Lord Jesus Christ.

All too soon came the day on which Miss Grey had to sail. She was not alone, for several other Indian missionaries were travelling by the same steamer. Some were going out for the first time, and some were returning to their work, as she herself was doing.

Mr. Merton and Rex went with her to see her off, after a very loving good-bye from Marjorie and her mother, whom it was thought better to keep at home, as the excitement might be too much for Marjorie.

Just as they were leaving, her father stepped back and whispered

something into Marjorie's ear. What do you think it was? Why, it was to tell her that he had arranged for a lovely bicycle to be sent on board for auntie, for he had heard her say how useful one would be for her work in India. He had written a note, which he was going to leave with the captain, so that there might be a nice surprise for auntie when she was first left alone on the steamer. This secret cheered Marjorie up a little, but it was hard work for her and for auntie too to say the "good-byes."

After Mr. Merton and Rex had gone and the steamer had started, Miss Grey did feel a bit lonely, and a good deal home-sick, though the joy deep down in her heart, that she was going back to her work in India, was very, very great.

She was sitting alone in her cabin thinking, when there came a knock at the door, and the steward brought her a letter. It was the one that Mr. Merton had written, and it was full of loving words from him and his wife, thanking her for all that she had been, and all that she had done, during her time at home, and asking her to accept the *bicycle* which he had sent on board, and use it for her work in India.

To tell you a secret, Miss Grey had very much wished for a bicycle, for it meant a help towards doing more work; but she had not been able to afford to take one out with her, so Mr. Merton's gift was a great pleasure and a great surprise. And, best of all, she was able to thank our Heavenly Father that He had helped her to be a real help and blessing to some while she had been at

home. So it was with a very happy and thankful heart that she began her return journey to the work which she loved so much.

The Band meetings were kept on quite regularly, and it was not very many weeks before auntie's first letter reached her old friends. Here it is, for I am sure those who have learned to love Marjorie and her friends will be interested in the first letter that Miss Grey sent them.

CHAPTER XXIV

A LETTER FROM INDIA

BERHAMPUR,
November 26th.

MY DEAR LITTLE FRIENDS,—

I have been back at my work now just three weeks, and as I promised to send you a letter, and tell you about my journey and about some of the friends out here whom you have got to know, I think I had better begin to-day.

We had a good voyage, though it was very hot in the Red Sea—so hot that some of us slept on the deck of the steamer all night, instead of going down into the hot and stuffy little cabin. Travelling with us there was a Moor. His skin was a very dark colour, and he wore most handsome flowing robes. He could speak very little English, but fortunately one of our party, a missionary who was going to South India, knew a little Arabic, and so was able to talk and read with him, and tell him something about Jesus Christ. He was always very polite and ready to listen, and I hope he has not forgotten what he has learned.

At Port Said, he and the gentleman with whom he was travelling had quite an adventure. They went on shore, as many of us did; but when it was time to start, and the rest of us were on board, *they* were missing. The captain waited a little while, but

as they did not come, he went on. We had not gone very far down the Suez Canal before we heard a great noise of shouting. The canal is not very wide, and the banks, which are great stretches of yellow sand, seem quite near, and we could see, quite plainly, two donkeys, with a man on each, running as fast as ever they could, while the donkey boys, who ran along by their sides, shouted at the donkeys, and beat them, and did all they could to make them go even faster. The two men were the Moor and his friend, and only after they had had a good run in the hot sun did the captain stop the steamer and send a boat to fetch them on board. They looked so tired and hot, and their folly cost them ever so much money. I think they will be careful henceforth to get back to their steamer in time when they venture to go on shore.

Soon after that, at Ismalia, they left us. I do trust that the poor Moor will have gone somewhere where there are missionaries, and that he may have a chance of learning something more about Christ and His love. I think God wants us to pray for people we meet accidentally, as I met that Moor, and not just go on our own way, and forget all about them.

It was a long journey from Aden to Calcutta, though we stopped at Colombo, and had time to go on shore and see something of a very fine Buddhist temple near the town. But I was very glad when we came to the mouth of the Hoogly River, and the pilot came on board, and I knew that in a few more hours I should be back among the dear Bengali people.

My friend, Miss Newall, came to meet me, as well as some of the Calcutta missionaries, and we spent a couple of days with our friends there, and then started by the night train for Berhampur.

That meant a night in the train, and arriving at our station about ten o'clock in the morning. Crossing the river by the ferry, we found a "garri" waiting for us, and, as the ponies went well, we came in sight of our own house about twelve o'clock.

How different it all looked! The whole front of the whitewashed house was adorned with green; over the paths leading to the door were green arches, and everywhere little flags were waving in the air; and the verandah was full of friends, mostly women and children, all dressed in their best, and looking, oh, so happy! The little boys, those six little friends, and of course little Noni with them, had each a flag, and as we walked up the path they closed round us and sang—"Singing welcome, welcome, singing welcome, welcome home"; and then all the folk on the verandah joined in, and as I looked at their faces, I saw that they meant it all, and I was gladder than ever to be back in the place where Jesus had sent me to love, and help, and teach, some of His children.

The singing over, there was every one to be greeted; and some of the women had much to tell me, which they wanted to tell there and then. Some of them had had great sorrow while I had been away, some had had great joy; the children, too, had grown so much that I hardly knew some of them; so it was a long, long time before we had seen enough of each other, and our friends wanted to leave us.

My boxes came within a few days, and we had great fun unpacking and storing away, for Christmas and prize-givings, all the dolls and gifts that I had brought with me. Your things travelled beautifully; none of the dollies were broken, and already I have been glad to use one of the scrap-books.

You know I told you how very short a time our cold weather

lasts, and as we did not want to lose any of it, last week I went away to have a few days in the villages. I was there one Sunday, and all that day we had groups of people come to our bungalow, and we taught them like a number of Sunday-school classes. All sorts of people came, but late in the afternoon there came two children,

THE MISSION HOUSE, BERHAMPUR.

a little boy and his somewhat bigger sister, and these little folk I shall never forget. The little boy was lame, dreadfully lame; he had almost to crawl along, and he had the saddest, most suffering look on his dear little face. My heart went out to him, and I sat down beside him, and told him about Jesus and His love, and about

the Home above where there is no more pain and suffering.' And the laddie listened, for he had never heard anything like it before; and I think he remembered, for the next morning, before we left, his mother came to see the people who had told her boy such wonderful things.

I knew he had very few toys and pleasures, and was so glad I had one of your scrap-books with me, the one Bernard made, with a bright red cover. I wish you could have seen his joy when I gave it him for his own.

You asked me to find a little child you could support, and to tell you about her. There is one here in our home that I know you would love to have, and for whom Miss Newall wants to find some kind friends. She is only a baby about ten months old; but that will be all the nicer, for you will be able to help her for many, many years if she lives. Her name is Priabālā—"a wreath of love." Just two months ago Miss Newall was told that an old man wanted to see her. She went out, and found a very old man, evidently very ill, and in his arms was this little girlie.

He said: "I am very ill—it has taken me all day to get to you; but I have heard that you save the children. Do make this one live"; and he held out the little one, who too was ill, and so thin and miserable-looking. He told her the baby's mother had died, and her father had gone away no one knew where, and he was the only relation left, and it was not possible for *him* to look after her. So Miss Newall took the baby. At first it was very, very ill, but now it is better, and I am going to consider her *your baby*, and I will write to you about her from time to time, and when she is a little older you shall have a photograph of her.

I hope the Band will flourish. I think it will, for I am quite

sure you will all work hard for your little "wreath of love." Perhaps some of the girls will make her some little white pinafore frocks to send out in the box which is coming to me, I believe, during next year.

One other thing: while you collect money for her, and work for her, don't forget to *pray* for her. Pray that she may be a good girl, that all her life long she may love Jesus, and try to please Him, and that when she is grown up she may be a very bright light, shining and working for Him in dark India.

With my love to each one of you,

I remain,

Your loving friend,

RUTH GREY.

Miss Grey's letter was a great delight to each member of the Band, and all that winter and spring they worked very hard.

Marjorie was now as well as ever, and able to go to school again; but whatever plans were made for holidays, she and her friends faithfully kept the Saturday afternoons free, and by degrees others of their school-fellows got interested too, and begged to be allowed to join the Band. Two years afterwards the Band had grown a good deal larger, for there were fifteen members, and besides sending Miss Grey a fine box of dolls, pinafores, toys, and scrap-books, and the four pounds in money for their little "wreath of love," and sending something as usual for the general work of the Missionary Society, they were planning to have part of a cot in a hospital as theirs as well, and so were sending three pounds to the doctor Miss Grey had told them about.

And now we must take our leave of Marjorie and her little friends.

Rex finished his medical course, and went out to be a doctor among the Bhotiya people, away up in North India, near Thibet. Marjorie's work is at home; she is not strong enough to live in a tropical country, and, besides that, her parents need her, for she is their only daughter. But she has found many ways in which she can help the missionary cause, for she has never lost the interest in it which was started by auntie in her furlough year; and now that her brother is in India, she wants more than ever to do all she can to help those who are still in the darkness, and know nothing of the "Light of Life."

The other members of the Band keep up their interest, though they are scattered here and there, and rarely meet now. Phyllis is teaching in a High School, but I know her heart's desire is to be a missionary, and to teach some of the children in the far-off lands; and I believe the time will come when her way will be made plain, and the Great Teacher will send her to some place He has for her in India, or China, or Africa.

Auntie Ruth has been home once since the time of which I have been telling you, and all the Band arranged to meet her. It was like old times, though the children were then nearly all grown up, and she herself was getting grey, and in many ways not so young as she once was. But she really was just the same dear auntie, and had much to tell them of her life and work, and in turn they had much to tell her. They parted, feeling they were all fellow-workers in the greatest work in the world, the work our Master has given us to do, and in which we may be His fellow-workers, the work of showing to all men everywhere what He is, how He loves them, and how He longs to gain their love, and so

do His gracious saving and sanctifying work in all their hearts and in all their lives.

"Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

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